

# **The Symbolism and Rhetoric of Hair in Latin Elegy**

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**Abstract**

This thesis examines the hair imagery that runs through the works of Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid. Comparative analysis of the elegists' approaches to the motif, with particular emphasis on determining where and how each deviates from the cultural assumptions and literary tradition attached to hair imagery, sheds light on the character and purposes of elegy as a genre, as well as on the individual aims and innovations of each poet. The Introduction provides some background on sociological approaches to the study of hair, and considers the reasons why hair imagery should have such a prominent presence in elegy. Chapter 1 focuses on the elegists' engagement with the idea of *cultus* ('cultivation'), and their manipulation of the connotations traditionally attached to elaborate hairstyles, of sophistication on the one hand, and immorality on the other, to suit an elegiac context. Chapter 2 looks at how the complexities of the power relationship between the lover and his mistress play out in references to violent hair-pulling. Chapter 3 focuses on the sometimes positively and sometimes negatively spun image of grey-haired lovers, as a reflection of the lover-poet's own contradictory wishes for his relationship with his mistress; it also considers grey hair as a symbol of physical mortality, as contrasted with poetic immortality. Chapter 4 examines the use of images of loose hair (especially images of dishevelled mourning) to suggest connotations ranging from the erotic to the pathetic, and focuses on the effects the elegists achieve by using a single image to communicate multiple implications. The Conclusion considers the 'afterlife' of elegiac hair imagery: the influence that their approaches had on the handling of similar images in later works.

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**Abbreviations**

<i>AJA</i>	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>
<i>AJPh</i>	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
<i>ANRW</i>	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i>
<i>BICS</i>	<i>Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies</i>
<i>CB</i>	<i>Classical Bulletin</i>
<i>CJ</i>	<i>Classical Journal</i>
<i>CP</i>	<i>Classical Philology</i>
<i>CQ</i>	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
<i>CW</i>	<i>Classical World</i>
<i>G&amp;R</i>	<i>Greece and Rome</i>
<i>HSCPh</i>	<i>Harvard Studies in Classical Philology</i>
<i>ICS</i>	<i>Illinois Classical Studies</i>
<i>JHS</i>	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
<i>LIMC</i>	<i>Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae</i>
<i>MD</i>	<i>Materiali e Discussioni</i>
<i>OLD</i>	<i>Oxford Latin Dictionary</i>
<i>PCPhS</i>	<i>Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society</i>
<i>PHI</i>	<i>Packard Humanities Institute</i>
<i>PLLS</i>	<i>Papers of the Liverpool Latin Seminar</i>
<i>QUCC</i>	<i>Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica</i>
<i>RhM</i>	<i>Rheinisches Museum für Philologie</i>
<i>TAPA</i>	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>
<i>WS</i>	<i>Wiener Studien</i>
<i>YCS</i>	<i>Yale Classical Studies</i>
<i>ZPE</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>

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## Introduction

In the introductory poem of *Amores* book three, Ovid describes a visitation by Elegy and Tragedy personified. Each attempts to persuade him to adopt her respective genre, by listing its virtues, and the benefits the poet can achieve by devoting himself to it. The reader gets a clear sense of the character of each genre before either figure speaks a word, however, as their physical features, described upon their entrance, reflect their genres' stylistic features.<sup>1</sup> Elegy is described first, and the first aspect of her appearance to be noted is her hair: *uenit odoratos Elegia nexa capillos* (*Am.* 3.1.7). Its prime place gives this feature a certain prominence, which is borne out by the structure of the description as a whole (3.1.7-10). As both pentameters (appropriately) refer to Elegy's mismatched feet, the two couplets are made to echo each other, creating a balance and implying an equivalence between the two hexameters as well. This encourages us to see Elegy's hair as equal in significance, and perhaps similar in symbolic implication, to all the characteristics listed in line 9 (*forma decens, uestis tenuissima, uultus amantis*) put together. In a sense, her intricate, perfumed hairstyle not only introduces, but summarises the rest of the description. Tragedy's hair is described as well (3.1.12, 32), but is not emphasised to the same degree. Why, then, should Elegy's hair be given such prominence?<sup>2</sup> There are, as we shall see, many reasons, but a significant one, I would argue, is that Ovid's handling of the image is a self-referential acknowledgement of the prominence and significance of hair as a symbol and motif in love elegy as a genre – not only in Ovid's own love elegies, that is, but in those of his predecessors, Propertius and Tibullus, as well.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Schrijvers 1976: 415-17; Wyke 2002: 119-30; Gibson 2007: 72-3.

<sup>2</sup> Elegy's limp is also emphasised, but this is explicable by the importance of metre as a defining characteristic of genre.

<sup>3</sup> My focus is to remain primarily on Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid, to whom (in the absence of any significant extant amount of Gallus) the phrase 'the elegists' should hereinafter be taken to refer. Catullus, despite his large number of poems in elegiac metre, is not an 'elegist' in the same sense, either in style or in time period. The surviving output of the poets of the *Corpus Tibullianum*, meanwhile, is not sufficiently large to be of much constructive use for this type of study. Reference will be made to these and other poets throughout, but largely by way of comparison.

Many critics and commentators have noted that the prominent use of hair imagery is a striking and characteristic feature of Latin love elegy.<sup>4</sup> And, though critics' references to this apparent preoccupation with hair generally focus on the lover-poet's appreciation of his mistress's beautiful locks, or his distress at her excessive attention to their styling, the elegists actually present us with a wide range of images: not only of elegantly styled hair, and of dyed or over-adorned hair, but of heads oiled, perfumed, and wreathed with flowers; of white or greying hair, and thinning hair; loose and flowing hair; tangled, dishevelled, and even violently pulled and torn hair; hair heavy with water, and sprinkled with frost, and parched by the sun; the hair of the living and the dead; of mortals, and of gods and heroes. The frequency and variety of such imagery might be thought to be justified and explained by its sensory appeal and visual impact; elegy is, after all, rich in imagery of many kinds.

Examples of hair imagery actively exploited for its symbolic possibilities, though – and, generally, for effects much more complex than a one-to-one symbolic relationship between image and meaning – are far more common than purely decorative ones. In other words, hair is prominent in elegy not only because of the frequency with which it is mentioned, but because it is rarely 'just hair'. Instead, it carries strong connotative value, the force of which is often magnified: by striking phrasing; by the placement of the image at the start of a description, at a significant juncture in the structure of a poem, or in a prominent *exemplum*; or by allusions from one passage to another.

For an illustrative example, we can return to *Am.* 3.1.7-10, a description that actively engages the multiple implications and connotations attached to the type of hairstyle that Elegy sports, and is calculated not only to evoke specific features of elegy's style, but to

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<sup>4</sup> Martial, perhaps influenced by *Am.* 3.1, refers to the genre as *cultis . . . elegia comis* (5.30.4). Lilja notes that the elegists tend to dwell on their mistresses' hair; see 1965: 120, 125, 127-9; see also Laigneau 1999: 36-8. Bright describes hair as 'a kind of touchstone of character' for Tibullus (1978: 30, n.47), and claims that he 'speaks of hair more often than any other poet' (1978: 74-5). This is perhaps fair, as all but two of his sixteen elegies (2.4; 2.6) include some reference to hair. See also Griffin 1985: 10 ('all readers of the Augustan poets are struck by the attention they pay to the hair of the beloved and to its *cultus*'); Zetzel 1996: 74 ('Ovid's interest in hair . . . is apparent to any reader of his poetry').

allude to the genre's earlier literary models, and even to suggest something of its subject matter and Ovid's approach to it. Elegy is described as *nexa capillos* (3.1.7): with her hair braided. The word *nexa* is a standard one for describing plaited hair, but, probably by an extension of its sense of 'woven', *nectere* is also used of the process of composing poetry.<sup>5</sup> In this context of literary metaphor, then, the delicacy of Elegy's intricate and perfumed hairstyle evokes the care taken over refined, 'Callimachean' poems, for which fine weaving is a common metaphor; hence also her *uestis tenuissima* (3.1.9).<sup>6</sup> The effect is magnified by contrast with Tragedy's thick locks, her apparently loose, but only vaguely described hairstyle, and her heavy cloak (*fronte comae torua, palla iacebat humi*, 3.1.12; *densum caesarie . . . caput*, 3.1.32),<sup>7</sup> which suggest a comparatively 'heavy' genre, less subtle in its poetic technique and effects. Elegy's hairstyle has implications beyond this direct stylistic metaphor, however. On mortal women, ornate hairstyles (especially if they are also perfumed) are, in ancient literature of various genres, a sign of excessive attention paid to one's appearance, and the conscious desire to attract; such hairstyles are often depicted as morally questionable, and associated with courtesans and prostitutes.<sup>8</sup> Elegy's hairstyle thus matches, but colours our interpretation of her *forma decens* and her *uultus amantis* (3.1.9); she is not simply beautiful, but self-consciously attractive, in the style of the *puellae* of elegy themselves. This suggests several more features of the genre, as Ovid imagines it: its less than respectable, amatory subject matter; its *leuitas* in comparison to 'serious' genres (an impression borne out by Elegy's sprightly manner, and by her own admission: 3.1.33-4, 41-2); and even the conscious *nequitia* of Ovid's own lover-poet persona, in (for the time being,

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<sup>5</sup> *OLD*, s. u. *necto*, 10.

<sup>6</sup> On weaving as a metaphor for poetic composition (and one often associated with hair), see for example Nethercut 1975; Snyder 1981; Zetzel 1996: 77-9; Papaioannou 2006: 56-8. See also below, pg. 21, 36-7, 61 n.109.

<sup>7</sup> As Wyke points out (2002: 126), the word *caesaries* appears nowhere else in Ovidian elegy (or in Propertius or Tibullus), but is common in epic; its use here may contribute to Tragedy's *grauitas*.

<sup>8</sup> See below, pg. 15.

at least) choosing *Elegy* over her more respectable counterpart.<sup>9</sup>

The rich symbolic value and weight of meaning assigned to hair in *Am.* 3.1 is not a unique phenomenon, but is characteristic of the way in which hair imagery is handled by the elegists. This being the case, focusing on this motif makes for a useful ground from which to examine a number of aspects of the genre, and of the individual elegists' poetic characters, techniques, and stylistic developments. There has been some specific critical acknowledgement of this fact, beyond the isolated observations cited above (n. 4); Hohenwallner (2001), for example, has made a book-length case for the wide-ranging importance of hair imagery in the elegists. Her main goals, though (in the extended first chapter, 2001: 11-58), are the categorisation of this imagery into types, and a general argument for the significance of the motif, rather than close analysis of the effects of particular passages, which she undertakes in only a limited way (in a series of shorter chapters, 2001: 59-96). After a chapter on Catullus's *Coma Berenices*, she focuses primarily on Ovid, and brings in parallel passages from Propertius and Tibullus only by way of comparison.<sup>10</sup> I hope to demonstrate that the depth and complexity of the elegists' engagement with and manipulation of the symbolism of hair is such as to invite a more complete and detailed analysis, focusing on the content, tone, purposes, and, most importantly, the context of each image, both immediate (that is, the role that the passage plays in the poem of which it forms a part), and broad (for example, its place in the social and literary history of imagery of that type). Before tackling specific passages, however, I shall first, in this introductory chapter, consider some background questions: why hair imagery should have been so attractive to the elegists in the first place, why it is particularly suited to filling the roles that it does in their poetry, and what is to be gained from an examination of

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<sup>9</sup> On 3.1 as a reversal of Heracles's choice of Virtue (a simply-dressed maiden) over Vice (an over-adorned prostitute), told, for example, at *Xen. Mem.* 2.1.22, see Schrijvers 1976; Boyd 1997: 197-200; Wyke 2002: 130-9; Gibson 2007: 72-4.

<sup>10</sup> The only other extended, comparative look at hair in elegy of which I am aware is Hälikkä 2001, an article analysing Ovid's use of the image of loose hair.

their use of it. The anthropological and sociological background of hair and attitudes to hair in society and literature is a necessary first stopping point, if we are to consider these questions in a fully grounded manner, and place elegiac hair imagery in its fuller context.

The body, being a shared reference point for all human beings, and the medium and vehicle for our dealings with each other and with the outside world, is a natural source of symbolism: of metaphors for social relationships and interactions, and for our understanding of the world, of culture, and of the place of the individual.<sup>11</sup> Sociologists and anthropologists have noted a number of reasons for hair's special aptness to be invested with such symbolic meaning,<sup>12</sup> but chief among these is the fact that hair occupies a liminal and ambiguous position in relation to the rest of the body. For example, its constant and obvious growth (and re-growth when cut off) gives the impression of a unique vitality; and yet, hair is inert, is without feeling beyond the scalp itself, and can be cut off without pain. It is separable from the body, making its status as a part of the body, and the degree to which it can be considered alive, uncertain.<sup>13</sup> This ambiguity is further complicated by the fact that, once removed from the body, hair does not readily rot or decay, and can thus appear to 'outlive', or even to grant a sort of immortality to its former owner, with whom it is often thought to retain a connection.<sup>14</sup> Hair, then, is partly dead and partly alive; part of the body, but not part of the body; particularly mortal in one sense, and almost immortal in another. It also occupies an uncertain position on another important continuum – that between nature and culture. If it is

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<sup>11</sup> See Douglas 1966; Firth 1973; Obeyesekere 1981; Scheper-Hughes & Lock 1987. For some useful thoughts on the problems associated with accessing ancient peoples' understanding of such symbols in their own cultures, see Niditch 2008: 8-10.

<sup>12</sup> For recent summaries of critical approaches to hair symbolism, see Biddle-Perry & Cheang 2008: 3-5; Niditch 2008: 4-14.

<sup>13</sup> On hair as half-dead, half-alive, see Firth 1973: 262-3; Myerowitz Levine 1995: 85-7; Miller 2008: 183-4. On varying early modern opinions about whether hair is part of the body, see Fisher 2006: 122-3. See also Douglas (1966: 148-50), who explains the 'power' and 'danger' that tend to be invested in the 'marginal' parts of the body.

<sup>14</sup> These features also account for the significant role that cut hair plays in the magic, rituals, and superstitions of many cultures; see Hallpike 1969: 258-9; Cooper 1971: 215-17; Firth 1973: 294-6; Jordán 2000: 139-40; Gaillard-Seux 2006 (on hair in ancient medicine); Miller 2008. Consider also the significance placed on locks of hair as love tokens, mementoes, and relics, on which see Cooper 1971: 224-8, Ofek 2009: 42-52; Dobranski 2010: 338-9.

not to become a matted and unwieldy mass, hair must be maintained, and cared for, even if this cultivation consists of nothing more than periodically cleaning and combing it, or shaving it off. Hair can thus represent the threat of return to a natural, ‘wild’ state as easily as it can represent culture itself, and the individual’s resistance to such a regression, depending on which of its aspects is emphasised.<sup>15</sup> These two main dichotomies associated with hair (life/death, nature/culture) reflect concerns of central importance to most societies, and thus account in large part for the widespread perception that hair and the ways in which it is dressed are significant, in both senses – that they are important, and that they ‘mean’ something.

Hair’s specific symbolic meanings and uses, in day-to-day life, in ritual, and in the reflection of both in art and literature, are extremely varied, thanks in part to hair’s own natural variety, and in part to its versatility. By the former, I mean the variations that naturally occur from person to person in their hair’s appearance: in colour, texture, degree of curl, and growth pattern. These variations are a handily conspicuous way to differentiate people visually, whether as individuals, or by category – for example, by sex, by age, or by ethnic group – and any such source of visual difference is liable to be invested with significance by a given society and the individuals within it, whether consciously or unconsciously, fairly or unfairly.<sup>16</sup> Since the categories just listed – sex, age, ethnicity – are all fraught with their own political, societal, and cultural loads of connotations and implications, the different aspects of hair with which each category comes to be associated are liable to take on that category’s connotations, and come to symbolise its implications. In

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<sup>15</sup> See Synnott 1987: 381; Myerowitz Levine 1995: 88-9; Lawal 2000: 95-6. Hair grows on the body much as plants grow on the earth (note that, in Latin, *coma* means both ‘hair’ and ‘foliage’). This makes hair liable to be metaphorically associated with vegetation – another source of symbols of nature and culture; see Olivelle 1998: 29-30; Hohenwallner 2001: 41-3, 44-5. The fact that almost all animals are hairier than humans also helps to make hair prone to connotations of wildness and animality. On the hairiness of the ‘wild man’ figure, see Mobley 1997; Dikötter 1998; Niditch 2008, especially 113-19; Wiesner-Hanks 2009: 32-47.

<sup>16</sup> On the often problematic relationship between hair and racial difference, for example, see Dikötter 1998: 51-5; Jackson 2000; Rosenthal 2004: 1-8; Cheang 2008. On hair, race, and ethnic identity in the ancient world, see Bradley 2009: 137-50; Santucci 2011: 79-80.

certain cultural and historical contexts, for example, beards have come to symbolise traits considered masculine, such as martial strength, sexual vigour, or intellectuality, to the point where beardless men might be thought to be deficient in these areas.<sup>17</sup> Stereotyping and generalisation, of course, occur at every stage of such series of associations; maleness does not naturally grant any of the above qualities, any more than beardedness does. But this does not diminish the power or effectiveness of the symbol. Consider also the association between grey hair and seriousness of character to be examined below, in the chapter on Hair and Age. It is based both on a generalisation of the idea that the old have grey hair (though not all people go grey no matter how old they get, and some start to go grey when they are still very much in their prime), and on societal ideas about the attitudes and pursuits proper to certain ages, rather than on any natural or necessary truth about the conduct of the young and the old, or of the grey-haired and the dark-haired.<sup>18</sup> For our purposes, though, it is not the objective validity of any individual hair-related symbol that counts, but the symbol itself, and its degree of importance in Roman culture.

This principle is especially relevant when it comes to signals and symbols that are artificially and, often, intentionally produced; this is where hair's versatility comes into play. Hair's natural variety pales in comparison with the almost infinite number of ways in which it can be artificially manipulated.<sup>19</sup> It can be washed, combed, cut, curled, dyed, shaved, braided, bound, matted, covered, supplemented with wigs and hairpieces: styled and arranged in any number of ways, with each resulting variation liable to take on connotations of its own; these connotations can be just as powerful as those attached to natural variations, and are often more so. Head hair's position, framing our faces, only increases its prominence as a

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<sup>17</sup> See Cooper 1971: 37-46; Firth 1973: 265-7; Fisher 2006: 83-123; Niditch 2008: 97-100.

<sup>18</sup> For more examples, see Ofek 2009: 53-62 and Rifelj 2010: 22-4, on the physiognomic theories of the nineteenth century.

<sup>19</sup> The 'manipulative potential' of hair is cited as a reason for its significance in social interaction and ritual by Hallpike 1969: 257; Firth 1973: 262-3; Hershman 1974: 291; and Synnott 1987: 381.

stage for such social signals.<sup>20</sup> In short, whether we utterly neglect our hair, maintain it just enough to blend in with the norm (however that is defined in a given context), style and adorn it in extravagant ways, or cover and hide it, we cannot help but make a statement with it – even if that statement is ‘I should not like to draw attention to myself, for good or ill’.

Connotations and meanings can attach in a highly specific way to individual styles in particular contexts, making them into clear and direct statements; consider the early modern ‘love-lock’, the shaved heads of Buddhist monks, or the ‘Afro’ of 1970s America.<sup>21</sup> But they can also attach, in a broader way, to whole categories of styles – colourful and theatrical styles versus plain and restrained ones, loose versus bound styles, short versus long styles, and so on. The associations that build up around particular hairstyles or categories of hairstyles, especially if they do represent broad principles or basic distinctions, can become so ingrained that, though artificial, they come to be seen as practically natural. This tendency is perhaps most easily observable in the gendering of long hair as feminine and short hair as masculine that has persisted over large parts of the world for centuries, independent of variations and fluctuations in style within the two categories of ‘short’ and ‘long’.<sup>22</sup>

It is important here, though, to note explicitly what has already been implied at various points in this introduction: that the nature and relative importance of the associations attached to hair and to the ways it is acted upon are very much culture- and context-specific.

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<sup>20</sup> On hair as social signal, see Cooper 1971: 133-49; Firth 1973: 271-4. On the ‘public’ nature of hair, see Synnott 1987: 381; Biddle-Perry 2008. Body hair (on clothed bodies, at least) is much less visible, and is often considered significantly more private than head hair; see Firth 1973: 269-70. This does not lessen its liability to be invested with symbolic significance, however. For example, hairiness is often associated with masculinity, heightened sexuality, and/or animality (see above, n.15). These associations can make female body hair especially a locus of shame, and its partial (or, sometimes, complete) removal is common in many cultures (see Cooper 1971: 77-89; Delaney 1995: 55-6; Lesnick-Oberstein 2010). Pubic hair is often an exception, despite its extreme conspicuousness on a naked body; this is perhaps because it is itself a covering, of sorts. On the paradoxes associated with female pubic hair, see Endres 2004; Sargeant 2008. On the ‘invisibility’ of women’s body hair in much of Western art and literature (outside the context of its removal), see Williams 2010. On body hair, depilation, and issues of masculinity in the ancient world, see below, pg. 83, n.165.

<sup>21</sup> On love-locks, see Dobranski 2010: 337. On Buddhist tonsures, see Lang 1995: 33-8. On Afros, see Jackson 2000; Tulloch 2008. For ancient examples of hairstyles that communicate specific messages, see below, pg. 14 n.2, pg. 70-2.

<sup>22</sup> On the gendering of hair in modern Western society, see Synnott 1987: 383-93. See Fisher 2006: 129-33 on early modern explanations for why it is ‘natural’ for women to have longer hair than men. This idea has in certain contexts gained force from biblical justification (see D’Angelo 1995: 135, on Paul, 1 *Cor.* 11.14-15).

Around the middle of the twentieth century, attempts were made – most notably by Berg (1951), Leach (1958), and Hallpike (1969) – to determine the basic trends or guidelines that govern the hair symbolism of all cultures. Berg, arguing from a psychoanalytic perspective, suggests that the uniting factor of all rituals and practices involving hair is a symbolic relation between the hair and the genitals, whereby, in the subconscious of the individuals involved, hair represents aggressive sexuality, and the cutting or shaving of the hair is a symbolic castration. Leach takes a firmly anthropological approach instead, emphasising societal pressure and the weight of custom over individual anxiety,<sup>23</sup> but he essentially agrees with Berg's idea that most hair rituals and practices rely on a symbolic equation of the hair with the genitals. He summarises his own interpretation as follows: 'long hair = unrestrained sexuality; short hair or partially shaved head or tightly bound hair = restricted sexuality; close shaven [or matted and neglected] head = celibacy' (1958: 153-4). Hallpike makes very reasonable objections to this scheme (1969: 257-60), citing prominent exceptions to Leach's rules, but he goes on to replace it with a scheme of his own, which is only slightly more satisfactory: that 'long hair is associated with being outside society', 'the cutting of hair symbolises re-entering society, or living under a particular disciplinary regime within society', and that, in general, 'cutting [or dressing] the hair equals social control' (1969: 260-1). The problem with all of these schemes is that, though they do of course apply to some extent, in some situations, too much special pleading is required to make them seem universally applicable. The rituals and symbolism associated with hair vary so greatly through time and across cultures that exceptions to any attempted universal interpretation are easy enough to find, as Leach does for Berg's, and Hallpike does for Leach's, and subsequent studies have done for all three.<sup>24</sup> The concept of a universally applicable code to interpreting

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<sup>23</sup> See also Douglas 1966: 158-9.

<sup>24</sup> See for example Hershman's comparison of each scheme to his analysis of hair ritual in the Punjab (1974: 294-6), Obeyesekere's, to his case studies of Hindu ascetics (1981: 13-21, 50-1), and David's, to his analysis of hair in Spartan society (1992).

hair symbols also fails to explain or fully to take into account the multiple and sometimes contradictory meanings that can attach to a single symbol in a single cultural context; such schemes can thus end up being more limiting than enlightening.<sup>25</sup>

A more recent trend, then, which gained ground in the 1970s and 80s, and which does more justice to the huge variety of meanings assigned to hair in real practice, has been to acknowledge how specific the beliefs, practices, and symbolism attached to hair are to their particular context, and to recognise that, although they are dependent on the current needs and concerns of each culture and time period, they are not therefore predictable. Hairstyles and ways of acting on the hair have no fixed and inherent meaning, but gain meaning from their context.<sup>26</sup> This means that the symbols attached to hair are also changeable: as dominant ideologies are challenged by opposing ideologies, and as cultural beliefs and practices shift, hairstyles and attitudes to hair shift along with them.<sup>27</sup> The attitudes and styles that thus come into favour need not be consciously connected, in the minds of those who adopt them, with the societal changes they accompany, especially once they have become well established, and what was once eccentric has become the new norm. While they are still striking, though, and their referents still topical, hairstyles can be heavily politically loaded, and be employed as symbols of support for a particular worldview or ideology. One might think of men's long hair, adopted as an expression of counter-cultural feeling in the West in the 1960s and 70s; or, for a contemporary example, one might consider the cultural, political, and religious issues connected with the debate over women's freedom to wear or

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<sup>25</sup> See for example Cooper 1971: 65-8, on the paradoxical association of young women's long, loose hair with both virginity and promiscuity. On other ambiguous 'hair signs', see Firth 1973: 265-7; Synnott 1987: 388, 400-2.

<sup>26</sup> See Firth 1973: 296-8 ('the essence of interpretation of such symbols . . . lies not in attributing significance to the symbolism of each item in itself, but in recognizing the symbolism of the conjoined likenesses and contrasts, in systematic arrangement', 298); Hershman 1974: 294-6 ('There is nothing natural in the semantic form of hair which makes a particular metaphorical order inevitable in any culture', 296); Obeyesekere 1981; Synnott 1987: 404-10; Olivelle 1998: 31-41. Ross's description (2000) of the different reactions prompted by her dreadlocks in the U.S. and in Ghana is also instructive.

<sup>27</sup> On the tendency of opposing ideologies to be signposted by opposite hair signals, see Synnott 1987: 394-400. For examples, see Fisher 2006: 142-7 and Dobranski 2010: 337-8, on gendered politics and hair in the English civil war, and Cheng 1998, on the shifting policies relating to men's 'queues' in China.

not to wear headscarves, and the different ways in which these issues have manifested themselves in France, or in Turkey, or in Iran.<sup>28</sup>

Following the establishment of the idea that hair's connotations are not only culturally produced but culture-specific, it is perhaps not surprising that the most recent dominant trend in the study of hair symbolism has been to examine more closely its role in particular societies, and at particular periods. The last ten years have thus seen extended studies of hair symbolism and attitudes to hair in the art, literature, and society of early modern England (Fisher 2006, chapters 3 and 4; Snook 2011, part 3), ancient Israel (Niditch 2008), Victorian England (Ofek 2009), nineteenth-century France (Rifelj 2010), and mediaeval Europe (Milliken 2012), as well as collections of essays devoted to the subject, covering a wide range of times and cultural contexts (Biddle-Perry & Cheang 2008; Lesnick-Oberstein 2010), including a volume focusing on hair in ancient Rome (Micheli & Santucci 2011).<sup>29</sup> A major focus of many of these examinations has been on artists' and authors' engagement with the symbolism attached to hair. This is, in part, an acknowledgement of the fact that, given the wide range and constant fluctuation in the meaning of particular social signs, we cannot fully understand pieces of art and literature in which hair imagery is important without first recognising and understanding the symbolism that underlies that imagery. To take examples only from various periods of our own culture: the meaning and significance of Shakespeare's references to Sir Andrew Aguecheek's lank, flax-coloured hair in *Twelfth Night*, or Milton's description of Adam and Eve's hair in *Paradise Lost*, or William Holman Hunt's illustrations for Tennyson's 'The Lady of Shalott', or, for that matter, the lyrics of the Crosby, Stills,

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<sup>28</sup> On men's long hair in the 60s and 70s, see Firth 1973: 274-83; Graham 2004. On the headscarf debate, see Salton 2008: 167-215; Kuru 2009: 107-8, 124-33; Badiou 2011; Elver 2012: 111-28 (France); Delaney 1995, especially 64-5; Kuru 2009: 187-93; Kavakci Islam 2010; Seggie 2011; Elver 2012: 15-40 (Turkey); Rostam-Kolayi 2003: 166-72; Chehabi 2003; Najmabadi 2005: 132-7; Zahedi 2008 (Iran).

<sup>29</sup> See also Oliensis 2002, on hair imagery as an (anti-)closural element in Horace. From the previous decade, see Eilberg-Schwartz & Doniger 1995 (on women's hair and heads in Mediterranean cultures); Hildebeitel & Miller 1998 (on hair in Asian cultures); Sieber and Herreman 2000 (on hair in African cultures). Volume 38(1) of *Eighteenth Century Studies* (2004) is dedicated to hair. Several recent examinations of Roman portraiture have focused on the meaning and significance of hairstyles: Brilliant 1994; Mannsperger 1998; Ziegler 2000; Micheli 2011.

Nash, and Young song, ‘Almost Cut My Hair’,<sup>30</sup> cannot be comprehended on more than the most basic level without an understanding of what hair and the particular signs and symbols being called upon meant in the cultural and historical context of each work; these meanings would have been clearer to the works’ contemporary readers and audiences, but must, today, be re-accessed. Such an approach does not simply grant us basic understanding, however, but helps us to analyse the relevant works more deeply than we might otherwise have been able to do. Art and literature can reflect and confirm the dominant assumptions and attitudes of the society in which they are produced, but they can also challenge them, whether directly, or by apparently adopting, but subtly subverting them. As the symbolism assigned to hair is so intricately associated with the prevailing attitudes of a given culture, an examination of artists’ and authors’ uses and manipulations of that symbolism can tell us much about their attitudes to and perceived place within their cultural, political, historical, and artistic/literary contexts.

It is with all this in mind that we can return to the question of why hair imagery should have appealed to the Latin love elegists in particular, and have become such a prominent motif in their poetry. We have considered hair’s aptness to take on symbolic value, and seen that the ideas with which it tends to be symbolically associated include themes central to elegy: nature and culture, gender and sexuality, individuals’ roles in and relationships to society, and issues related to age, death, and immortality. We have also considered the multiplicity of meanings with which each individual image associated with hair can become invested; it is easy to see how a category of imagery so multivalent will have been a useful tool for the elegists, who tend to operate largely on the level of implication, develop trains of thought of extreme complexity and subtlety, and frequently require images and *exempla* to do double and triple duty in the process. We have seen how the default

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<sup>30</sup> See Ungerer 1983 (on *Twelfth Night*); Dobranski 2010 (on *Paradise Lost*); Ofek 2009: 63-6 (on Hunt and ‘The Lady of Shalott’); Storey 2006: 107 (on ‘Almost Cut My Hair’).

meaning of hair symbols is generally determined by the relevant culture at large, making subversions of these meanings a socially and politically significant act. This, too, will have made the use and manipulation of hair imagery attractive to the elegists, given that an important characteristic of elegy is the speaker's conception of himself as separate from mainstream society, and as embracing an alternative set of values and priorities.<sup>31</sup>

All these features, of course, also make the elegists' use of hair imagery a fruitful ground for study. An acknowledgement of the complexity both of the symbolism attached to hair in Roman culture, and of the elegists' approaches to that symbolism, can help us to avoid over-simplification, or misinterpretation based on modern biases, and can help to clarify the precise workings of some very complex patterns of thought. The connections between the symbolism of hair and several themes that are of importance to elegy, meanwhile, mean that the analysis and comparison of individual images, considered in their full context, can contribute to our understanding of those overarching themes, and of the roles that they play in the corpus of each poet. And, finally, an understanding of which attitudes about hair and images of hair presented by the elegists reflect the norms of the culture and of the literary tradition, which skew them, and which subvert them outright can shed light on the elegists' engagement with their historical, political, and literary contexts, and on the place that they would like the reader to understand them (as real-life poets) and their personas (as fictionalised and idealised lover-poets) to inhabit within those contexts.

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<sup>31</sup> In addition to these general sources of appeal, hair images will have seemed generically appropriate by association with Callimachus's *Coma Berenices* (*Aet.* fr.110); on Catullus's adaptation (*Catull.* 66) as central to the self-definition of his corpus, see Höschele 2009.

## Chapter 1: Order and Beautification

### Introduction

The arrangement and beautification of the hair is a fitting subject for us to examine first, not only because adornment is the focus of a large proportion of the references to hair in elegy, but because its symbolic significance relates closely to important aspects of the genre. The styling of women's hair, as the more prominent motif, will be examined first and at greater length, with a discussion of men's hair to follow.

Roman women's hair was generally left to grow long, and bound up in public, whether in a simple bun or plait, or in a more complex style. Though some women will have chosen to veil their heads in public, there is no strong evidence that Roman women (except perhaps those living in parts of Greece and the Eastern provinces) were expected or compelled to do so.<sup>1</sup> The period with which we are most concerned, of the late Republic and early Empire, was the first period, according to Trillmich (1976: 36-40, 51-7), in which Roman hairstyles were truly subject to fashion, rather than determined by tradition and one's social role.<sup>2</sup> In this period, then, it became one of the most individualised aspects of feminine dress, and a particularly striking aspect of a woman's appearance, communicating not only her status and role in society, but her individual personality.<sup>3</sup> The styles that emerged can seem simple and restrained, in comparison with the excesses of later periods; even at this early stage, though, private portraiture shows a wide range of hairstyles, mostly based on complex patterns of plaits and 'French' braids, culminating in a bun on the nape or the crown, and often incorporating jewellery. The *nodus* hairstyle of Octavia and Livia, a consciously simple and severe response to such styles, was influential for a time, but was by no means

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<sup>1</sup> See MacMullen 1980: 208-9, 217-18; Thompson 1988: 112-13; Hilton & Matthews 2008; Olson 2008: 33-6.

<sup>2</sup> Through most of the Republican period, young married women wore plaits bound with *uittae*, *matres familias* wore a conical style called the *tutulus*, and so on. On these and other traditional hairstyles, see Sensi 1981.

<sup>3</sup> See Ziegler 2000: 126, 255-64; Bartman 2001, especially 1 and 19-22; Olson 2008: 70-1; Sassi 2011: 3; Frapiccini 2011: 13-16.

universally adopted.<sup>4</sup>

Their high degree of visual impact and variability, and close association with beauty and self-presentation would in itself make it understandable for hairstyles to be a focus of attention for the elegists, but there are further reasons for this. Hair, as described in the introductory chapter (pg. 5-6), is closely associated with the concept of *cultus*: ‘cultivation’, in every sense of the word. It is, as Myerowitz Levine puts it (1995: 88-9), ‘an apt, almost inevitable choice as a *locus* for the statement of social attitudes regarding the proper or desired relationship between nature and culture’. The ambiguities attached to that relationship for the Greeks and the Romans are reflected in the moral implications of adornment in the literature of both cultures. Simple styles in hair and clothing, representing an acceptable degree of cultivation, are associated with moral uprightness and, especially for the Romans, with the virtues of the legendary past; see for example Seneca’s praise of his mother’s virtues, in which her taste for modest clothing and lack of adornment is set alongside such traditional virtues as her pride in her children (*Helu.* 16). Expensive or artificial over-adornment, meanwhile, represents excessive cultivation, and is associated with deceit, luxury, and moral decline; consider the scene in Plautus’s *Truculentus* (286-96) in which the title character’s violent moral indignation towards a prostitute is directed at her clothing, makeup, and particularly her curled, set, and perfumed hair, which he threatens to tear out.<sup>5</sup>

As a result of such associations, mentions of hairstyle in elegy are rarely merely

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<sup>4</sup> As Ziegler explains (2000: 125-6), fashions were guidelines only, within which there was broad scope for variation; outside of Imperial portrait ‘types’, it is rare to see a style exactly duplicated. On the fashions of the late Republic and early Empire, see Furnée-van Zwet 1956: 11-15, and figs. 13-18; Trillmich 1976: 40-58, and plates 14-18; Kleiner 1977: 127-31. On the *nodus*, see below, pg. 71 n.138.

<sup>5</sup> For other anti-cosmetic sentiments, see Xen. *Oec.* 10.2-13; Plut. *Mor.* 145a, 693b-c; Lucr. 4.1171-91; Val. Max. 2.1.5; Sen. *Ben.* 1.10.2; Nonn. *Dion.* 42.81ff. Consider also the comparison of the Acropolis to an over-adorned prostitute at Plut. *Per.* 12.2, or of simplicity in rhetorical/literary style to simplicity in dress, at Cic. *Orat.* 78-9, *ad Att.* 2.1.1; Quint. *Inst.* 8 pr.19-22; Tac. *Dial.* 26.1. These associations continued in the Christian writers, with an added religious slant; see D’Angelo 1995; Ziegler 2000: 229-47; Santucci 2011: 122-6. On the anti-cosmetic tradition generally, see Gibson 2003: 21-5; Olson 2008: 80-95; Santucci 2011: 108-10. Batten (2009: 484-97) attempts to recover the attitudes of the women concerned.

appreciative, and are best understood in their relation to *cultus* and the moral issues connected to it. By stating opinions on hairdressing and other forms of *cultus*, the elegiac speaker defines the place he sees himself and his mistress occupying in relation to popular and/or traditional morality. There are also other factors to consider. The range of meaning of *cultus* is as wide as that of ‘culture’ or ‘cultivation’. As applied to poetry, it implies artistry and sophistication:<sup>6</sup> features that the elegists associate in a positive sense with their own genre.<sup>7</sup> Their handling of the distinction between elegance (a positive trait) and luxury (a negative one) is thus of symbolic significance for the self-definition of elegy as a genre. It would be limiting and inaccurate to suggest that discussions of adornment in elegy are ‘actually’ about poetry, but we should keep in mind that, in many cases, they are ‘also’ about poetry.

The connotations and moral and/or aesthetic value assigned to artificial adornments, and the ways in which these are compared and contrasted with other types of *cultus*, vary from poet to poet and from poem to poem. Ovid’s take on the motif is best viewed in the light of those of his predecessors, and so our starting-point will be Propertius and Tibullus, both of whom generally stick to the traditional, moralising idea that bodily *cultus* taken beyond the level of cleanliness and neatness is suggestive of artificiality, self-centredness, the display of wealth, and/or the desire to attract lovers and their expensive gifts. Precisely because it agrees in its basic shape with mainstream opinion, this standpoint is generally taken for granted; but, as Propertius and Tibullus are not seeking to present themselves as traditional moralisers, their attitude is more surprising than it gets credit for, and deserving of focused examination.

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<sup>6</sup> *OLD*, s. u. *cultus*, -a, -um, 4b.

<sup>7</sup> Ovid, for example, twice addresses Tibullus as *culte Tibulle* (*Am.* 1.15.28; 3.9.66).

Part 1: Propertius and Feminine *cultus*

First, then, to Propertius. The longest and most complex expression of his persona's views on *cultus* is 1.2, a poem entirely devoted to the subject. It opens with a description of Cynthia's adornments, of which her hairstyle is the first listed, and is mentioned twice, to emphasise two different aspects of what the speaker sees as its excessive *cultus*: it is ornately styled (1.2.1), and it is drenched in imported perfume (1.2.3). As we shall see, the separation of these two aspects of Cynthia's hairstyle, artistic complexity and foreign luxury, will become significant once the speaker's attitude towards *cultus* have been fully developed. As 1.2 is an important influence on several of the other passages to be examined in this chapter, though, it will be useful to examine and clarify this attitude before entering into the particular contribution made by hair imagery in full detail. The thrust of the opening description as a whole (1.2.1-6) is clear enough, summed up as it is by its final couplet: Cynthia's adornments are useless, in that they only hide her natural beauties:

*Quid iuuat ornato procedere, uita, capillo  
et tenues Coa ueste mouere sinus,  
aut quid Orontea crines perfundere murra,  
teque pregrinis uendere muneribus,  
naturaeque decus mercato perdere cultu,  
nec sinere in propriis membra nitere bonis?*

The idea is reinforced by a series of *exempla* drawn, appropriately enough, from the natural world: flowers, plants, streams, pebble beaches, and birdsong all draw their attractiveness from their unadulterated nature (1.2.9-14). A reference to painting at line 13 (*litorea natuius praelucent<sup>8</sup> picta lapillis*) – an undeniably artificial source of beauty – could be seen to trip up or undercut this passage.<sup>9</sup> In essence, though, the image supports the general message, implying as it does that seashores need no paint other than their own stones, just as Cynthia

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<sup>8</sup> For a summary of the problems with the MSS's *persuadent*, and of suggested emendations, see Allen 1974: 121. On *praelucent* (suggested by Hetzberg), and other suggestions along similar lines, see Heyworth 2007: 12-13.

<sup>9</sup> Camps (1969: *ad loc.*), Curran (1975: 6), and Keulen (2000: 90-1) see also a latent reference to mosaics.

needs no adornments beyond her own beauties: in other words, that Nature is a better artist than Art is.<sup>10</sup>

The intrusion of art into this description does, however, anticipate a second reference to painting later on (1.2.22), which is both more literal and more problematic. It comes near the end of another set of *exempla*: the heroines of old (Phoebe and Helaira, Marpessa, and Hippodamia), who attracted plenty of male attention, though their beauty was natural and unadorned, and their conduct perfectly chaste (1.2.15-24). To convey the exceptional quality of their beauty, Propertius compares their complexions to those seen in the paintings of Apelles (*sed facies aderat nullis obnoxia gemmis, / qualis Apelleis est color in tabulis*, 1.2.21-2). Curran (1975: 8-10) convincingly argues that the suggestion here is that there are acceptable ways in which Cynthia can be an *artifex formae* after all. Like Apelles, whose special varnish and proverbially spectacular skill made the complexions of his figures glow with a brightness equal to that of nature, she should be an artist in her own right, and allow her beauty to shine forth by cultivating her talents (cf. 1.2.27-30, to which we shall return soon), rather than hiding it in obviously artificial adornments.<sup>11</sup> As with the ‘painted’ shores example, the point is that natural beauty is equal to that of the best of paintings: that the heroines’ faces are natural masterpieces. Again, then, approving mention of an accomplished artist does not so much disturb the logical flow as prepare us for and foreshadow the shift in argument that is to follow, from a plain art vs. nature dichotomy to a more complex distinction between the forms of art and *cultus* of which the speaker approves and disapproves. The *exempla* themselves, meanwhile, introduce a greater moral ambiguity than

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<sup>10</sup> See Keulen 2000: 91-2. For ‘painted’ seashores, compare Ov. *Am.* 2.11.13-14, *nec medius tenuis conchas pictosque lapillos / pontus habet*.

<sup>11</sup> The effect of the allusion is perhaps more subtle than Curran suggests, though; comparing mythical heroines’ complexions to the only visual medium in which they will have been seen by the contemporary reader is not hugely jarring. Sharrock (1991: 39-40) takes Curran’s idea in a different direction, suggesting that Apelles is not Cynthia, but Propertius; he would like her to stop creating her own beauty via her low, practical arts, and submit to his creation of her, as a Galatea-style figure given life by his poetry. This is an interesting take, but it is difficult to see how Cynthia’s own role as divinely inspired artist, developed in 1.2.27-30, fits in.

is suggested by the anti-cosmetic first phase of the poem. The heroines attracted multiple lovers without the need for artificial beauty aids, and indeed, without even wanting to. If Propertius is encouraging Cynthia, a ‘natural masterpiece’ of equal attractive power, to follow suit, he is essentially reassuring her that looking chaste is no bar to being chased: that she has nothing to lose by toning down her adornments.<sup>12</sup> The *exempla* thus give a surface impression of moral rectitude on the part of the speaker, but at the same time hint at his recognition of his addressee’s less than virtuous goals and priorities, and his own willingness to play on them.

But if Propertius does not actually want to dissuade Cynthia from trying to attract men with her beauty, but only to encourage her to change her method of doing so, the end result, if the poem were to leave off here, would be the same as that which prompted the complaint: a beloved whose appearance attracts rivals. Hence, in the first line of the next couplet, the sudden return to these original concerns about Cynthia’s artificial beauty being calculated to (and likely to) attract rivals richer than himself (*ergo*<sup>13</sup> *ego nunc uereor ne sim tibi uilior istis*, 1.2.25). The second line (*uni si qua placet, culta puella sat est*, 1.2.26), which must in context be taken as a persuasive argument rather than a bland statement, introduces the point which is to dominate the rest of the poem, and counteract the danger presented by Propertius’s rivals in a way that the *exempla* failed to do. In itself, in the anti-beautification context of the first half of the poem, and with a play on *culta* in the sense of ‘worshipped’ or ‘adored’,<sup>14</sup> the line would seem to mean that a girl who is loved by even one man has no need of adornments, because she has no need to attract anyone else. But the full implications of the line rely on what follows it: Cynthia in particular will be especially ‘cultivated’, because

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<sup>12</sup> On this subtext, see Gaisser 1977: 282-5. On the *exempla* as the subtle means of changing the poem’s direction, see Allen 1962: 140-1.

<sup>13</sup> I here follow Heyworth in reading *ergo* rather than *non*; see 2007: 14-15. Interpretations of the line as it appears in the MSS end up having to explain why this section alone must be ironic or self-deceptive (Otis 1965: 15-16; Hodge and Buttimore 1977: 82; Lyne 1980: 108). For other suggested textual solutions, see Butler and Barber 1933: *ad loc.*

<sup>14</sup> *OLD*, s. u. *colo*, -ere, 6, 7.

she has been blessed by the gods with musical talent, wit, and ‘all the gifts of which Venus and Minerva approve’ (1.2.27-30). This suggestion adds a further meaning to *culta*, retrospectively: ‘cultured’ in the sense of ‘skilled in refined pursuits’.<sup>15</sup> Taken thus, with the word *culta* doing triple duty, the couplet, and thus the whole second half of the poem, becomes an argument for the varieties of *cultus* that please Propertius – musical talent, wit, and general refinement – to be preferred over the more material manifestations of the concept. Cynthia can lay claim to all three definitions of *culta* only if she concentrates on pleasing Propertius with her natural talents, rather than pleasing her less refined admirers with her adornments. Of course, we should note that there is a characteristic other than their creative and artistic inferiority that also differentiates adornments from the kind of *cultus* that Propertius endorses: they are foreign not only in the sense that they are imposed on and conceal natural gifts, but in the sense that they are imported, and thus expensive. There is, then, a subtext throughout, that Propertius would like Cynthia to cultivate her gifts and talents not only because they allow her natural attractiveness to show itself, but because they cost nothing. It is significant that by the last line, and indeed the last word of the poem, it is not *cultus* that is the problem anymore, but the unambiguously negative *luxuriae*.<sup>16</sup>

Although, on a first reading, the message of the opening description of Cynthia (1.2.1-6) seems straightforward, we can see in retrospect that it seeds all the more complex concepts and subtexts that are to be developed as the poem progresses. It is here that the full implications of the hair imagery in lines 1-3 become significant. The over-adornment of Cynthia’s hair has two aspects: she is going about not only *ornato capillo* (1.2.1), but with her hair doused in Eastern perfume (1.2.3). The former means simply ‘with your hair styled’,

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<sup>15</sup> *OLD*, s. u. *colo*, -ere, 10a; *cultus*, -a, -um, 4a. For this triple reading of *culta*, see Edwards 1961: 135; Lyne 1980: 109.

<sup>16</sup> For economic views of the poem, see Gaisser 1977: 382-5; James 2001: 245-6.

and does not necessarily imply rich adornments: this is *cultus*, but not *luxuriae*.<sup>17</sup> The phrase describing the perfume with which Cynthia oils her hair, though, lays particular stress on its exotic origins, and the lavishness with which it is used (*aut quid Orontea crines perfundere murra*). The two charges are separated by that of wearing fine Coan silks (1.2.2), emphasising the fact that they are seen as two separate grievances. Mention of Coan silk at this point, though, also plants the idea of refined accomplishments that is to be picked up on later: especially in elegy, Coan silk often signposts an allusion to Philitas of Cos, known for the finely crafted nature of his verse, and often referred to simply as ‘the Coan poet’.<sup>18</sup> The artful arrangement of Cynthia’s hair and the fineness of her silk dress, then, linked in the first couplet, are a symbolic suggestion of the genuine poetic talents that Propertius prizes; as the rest of the poem makes clear, however, he would prefer Cynthia to value the real thing, rather than the empty symbol.<sup>19</sup> The expensive oils with which she perfumes her hair, meanwhile, associated in the second couplet with her desire to ‘sell herself’ (*teque peregrinis uendere muneribus*, 1.2.4), suggest Propertius’s more practical objection to Cynthia’s method of dressing her hair: the greed that induces her to seek rich lovers. Propertius’s two problems with Cynthia’s hairstyle thus introduce the two main subdivisions of his complex view of what is wrong with her attitude to *cultus*, and do so early enough to subtly guide our understanding of the rhetorical turns that follow.

Both aspects of the poem’s message evoke traditional moral ideas about *cultus*, but put an elegiac spin on them. The suggestion that Cynthia reject artificial adornments sounds like a moral message, until we realise that Propertius’s arguments fully acknowledge and rely

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<sup>17</sup> OLD, s. u. *orno*, 4b. Propertius does elsewhere refer to hair decorated with jewellery (2.22.9-10: *siue uagi crines puris in frontibus errant / Indica quos medio uertice gemma tenet*), but there is no clear suggestion that that is what we are to imagine here.

<sup>18</sup> Ovid, for example, never mentions him by name, but only with reference to his birthplace: see *Ars* 3.329; *Rem.* 760; *Trist.* 1.6.2; *Ex Pont.* 3.1.58. See also Allen 1996. For more on Philitas and Coan silk, see below, pg. 36-7; on Philitas’s influence on the Latin poets, see Knox 1993.

<sup>19</sup> Zetzel (1996: 89-90) interprets the speaker’s disapproval of Coan silk as a rejection of Philitas’s style, but, as he acknowledges, this is hard to reconcile with Propertius’s frequent citation of Philitas as an influence and role model (2.34.31; 3.1.1-2; 3.3.51-2; 3.9.43-4; 4.6.3).

on her desire to attract men, that the poem as a whole argues not against her being sexually available at all, but for her being available to the speaker in preference to her other admirers (and waiving the usual requests for expensive gifts), and that he is urging her to cultivate alluring pursuits appropriate to a courtesan, rather than wifely and modest ones.<sup>20</sup> The ambiguous moral status of elegy itself is even pointed up rather than deemphasised, in the associations between Cynthia's ornate hairstyle and silk dress (the signs of her excessive *cultus*) and intricate poetry. The modification of mainstream moral ideas into arguments for elegiac ideals observable in 1.2 reflects a common tendency in Propertius's works. The glorification of the elegiac persona's life of love is one side of this tendency, but a dissatisfaction with its failings is another. The arguments made in 1.2 are for an idealised situation in which Cynthia rejects all her other admirers in favour of Propertius, and they go on to lead a blessed existence (something like that depicted in 2.15) forever afterwards: decidedly not what some of the moralists listed above in note 5 have in mind when they speak against elaborate adornments. On the other hand, these arguments are unlikely to achieve their desired effect, and would not be necessary at all were it not for Cynthia's desire to attract multiple rich lovers, and her accompanying greed for finery. These are of course career requirements for a courtesan; as James points out (2001: 239-50; 2003a: 167-73), the casting of such priorities as moral failings rather than practical necessities, and the relationship between elegiac lover and beloved as one which might be perfectly happy and stable if only these failings could be overcome, is nothing more than a fantasy. But the often uneasy maintenance of this fantasy is one of the defining features of the genre.<sup>21</sup>

Propertius uses the traditional associations of excessive attention to *cultus* to express this simultaneous devotion to the ideals of elegiac love and discomfort with its realities in a similar way in 1.15, which has been considered almost a companion piece to 1.2, particularly

<sup>20</sup> On the moral ambiguity of the *docta puella*, see Hemelrijk 1999: 79-84; Laigneau 1999: 60-8.

<sup>21</sup> On the inconsistency of Propertius's moral outlook, see Gibson 2009; he cites 1.2 as a prominent example (287), but comes to different conclusions about how it operates.

in structural analyses of book one.<sup>22</sup> Despite similarities in theme and structure, though, the context and tone of 1.15 are very different, and the particular aspects of *cultus* that it deals with differ accordingly. The poem begins *in medias res*, and though the emotional atmosphere is soon clear enough, the narrative context is only vaguely presented:

*Saepe ego multa tuae leuitatis dura timebam,  
hac tamen excepta, Cynthia, perfidia.  
aspice me quanto rapiat fortuna periclo:  
tu tamen in nostro lenta timore uenis,  
et potes hesternis manibus componere crines  
et longa faciem quaerere desidia,  
nec minus Eois pectus uariare lapillis  
ut formosa nouo quae parat ire uiro. (1.15.1-8)*

A major focus of attention in discussions of this passage has been attempting to determine the nature of the *periculum* in which Propertius finds himself, the main competing interpretations being that he is seriously ill,<sup>23</sup> that he is planning to undertake a perilous sea-voyage,<sup>24</sup> and that he is in no external physical danger, but is instead referring to the depth of his distress at Cynthia's indifference and untrustworthiness.<sup>25</sup> The fact that all three interpretations are supportable by the text, though, would suggest that the ambiguity is intentional. To the speaker, the precise nature of his peril is unimportant compared with the magnitude of the fact that it has had so little effect on Cynthia.<sup>26</sup> Hence the brevity and vagueness of his description of his own situation, compared with his description of Cynthia's manner and appearance. She has come in no hurry (1.15.4), and the evidence is her level of dress: she has taken the time to tidy up yesterday's hairdo,<sup>27</sup> primp at her leisure, and deck her bosom with jewels (1.15.5-7). In fact, ominously, she looks like a woman who is off to see a new lover (1.15.8). Much as in 1.2, what started as an objection to *cultus* on one ground – there, its

<sup>22</sup> See Otis 1965: 9; Camps 1969: 46, 79; King 1975: 114.

<sup>23</sup> Bailey 1956: *ad loc.*; Camps 1969: 79; Allen 1973; Hubbard 1974: 29; Lyne 1980: 96.

<sup>24</sup> Butler & Barber 1933: 174; Boucher 1965: 404.

<sup>25</sup> Davis 1972; Bennett 1972; Richardson 1976: 186; Mathews 2002: 30-3.

<sup>26</sup> See Gaisser 1977: 386; Heyworth 2007: 66.

<sup>27</sup> It would not have been unusual for a woman to go a few days without completely taking down and restyling her hair; the more complicated styles were time-consuming, and the way in which they were achieved – with needle and thread, rather than hairpins alone – made them durable enough to sleep on; see Stephens 2008, especially 124.

masking of natural beauty; here, the uncaring self-centredness that it displays – sidesteps into an objection on the ground that it demonstrates a desire to attract others. Of course, the fact that Cynthia has taken the time to beautify herself before coming to see Propertius is not firm proof either of lack of love or infidelity. I think it would be misguided, though, to suggest that Propertius’s linking of time spent on one’s hairstyle with fickleness is to be read as completely irrational.<sup>28</sup> On the contrary, the poem’s effect relies on the fact that, though the explanation Propertius has settled on is not the only possible interpretation of Cynthia’s appearance, it is a plausible one, based on the traditional associations of excessive *cultus*. Certainly in Propertius’s mind it is an open and shut case, especially when backed up by the *exempla* he provides. As in 1.2, these mark the shift from one of his problems with Cynthia’s conduct (her lack of concern for him) to another (her infidelity).

He contrasts her behaviour first with that of Calypso, who lamented unkempt on the seashore when Ulysses left her (1.15.9-14), then Hypsipyle, who wasted away mourning Jason’s departure (1.15.17-20), then Evadne, who joined her husband in death by leaping onto his pyre (1.15.21-2).<sup>29</sup> The idea uniting the three is the single-minded devotion to one’s lover over care for oneself that Cynthia has failed to demonstrate. Cynthia’s attention to her hair in particular provides the link that sets the series off: Calypso paid no attention to the maintenance of her own hair for days on end, as she lamented the loss of Ulysses:

*at non sic, Ithaci digressu mota, Calypso  
desertis olim fleuerat aequoribus:  
multos illa dies incomptis maesta capillis  
sederat, iniusto multa locuta salo,  
et quamuis numquam post haec uisura dolebat,  
illa tamen longae conscia laetitiae. (1.15.9-14)<sup>30</sup>*

<sup>28</sup> This is the interpretation, for example, of Hodge & Buttmore, who feel that ‘the discrepancy between accusation and evidence is deliberate’ (1977: 168-9).

<sup>29</sup> I follow Günther’s deletion of lines 15-16, *Alphesiboëa suos ulta est pro coniuge fratres, / sanguinis et cari uincula rupit amor*. On the problems of structure, grammar, and sense created by the couplet, see Heyworth 2007: 67.

<sup>30</sup> For more on this passage, see below, pg. 203.

In this anti-*cultus* context, *non sic* recalls the beginning of the series of mythical *exempla* at 1.2.15, with its similar contrasts between Cynthia's attention to her *cultus* and the virtuous indifference to *cultus* of the heroines of the past. The idea that Calypso remained dishevelled *multos dies* strengthens the contrast, when we remember that Cynthia has redone her hair despite its having been styled just the day before. In other words, if she had instead run straight out the door to see Propertius, she would not have had to do so with her hair flowing loose and dishevelled,<sup>31</sup> but would simply have had a day-old, somewhat ruffled hairdo; even this prospect, Propertius suggests, was too much for her vanity. In another direct contrast with Cynthia, Calypso maintained her unkempt state of lamentation despite the fact that she was never to see Ulysses again (1.15.13-14); Cynthia, in Propertius's mind, has beautified herself in preparation for seeing a new lover before he is even gone. Homer's Calypso is not particularly unkempt, nor does this seem to have been a traditional aspect of the scene.<sup>32</sup> It appears, then, that Propertius has extrapolated this visual detail from the context and the general associations of lamentation with dishevelment,<sup>33</sup> in order to increase the specificity of the contrast to the point where it cannot be denied.

Once this point-by-point, strongly visual comparison has been established, the idea of devotion to a departed lover leads us from the Calypso *exemplum* into one that relates to Cynthia and her current appearance in a less direct way:

*nec sic Aesoniden rapiantibus anxia uentis*

<sup>31</sup> This would, though, have been ideal; compare Venus rushing to the side of the dead Adonis, at Prop. 2.13.55-6 (on which see below, pg. 221-3).

<sup>32</sup> See Hom. *Od.* 5.262ff., 7.244ff.; she is, however, twice given the epithet *εὐπλόκαμος* ('of the beautiful tresses'), which may have suggested the idea. Among other references to the abandoned Calypso (Prop. 2.21.13-14; Ov. *Ars* 2.125-6; Apul. *Met.* 1.12.14), I have found none that describe her as dishevelled. There are few ancient depictions of Calypso in art extant (see *LIMC* V.1: 947-8); it is possible that Propertius's description has been influenced by copies of Nikias's *Calypso sedens* (Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* 35.132), but the painting's exact appearance is unknown, and works possibly based on it show Calypso with her hair veiled, not loose and dishevelled (*LIMC* V.1: 946, cat. 1-3).

<sup>33</sup> See below, pg. 183 n.7, pg. 192ff. Propertius may more particularly be picking up on the image of Ariadne, who, in a similar situation, is often depicted as dishevelled (see Catull. 64.63, 68; Ov. *Ars* 1.527-32, 3.153-8; *Her.* 10.16, 137, 147; and, for artistic depictions, *LIMC* III.1: 1067; III.2: 730-2, cat. 54, 74, 80, 97). It is understandable, though, that he should choose to refer to Calypso instead: Ariadne's story reflects more badly on Theseus than Calypso's does on Ulysses, and Ariadne ends up rescued by a new lover, Bacchus – hardly the message Propertius wishes to send.

*Hypsipyle uacuo constitit in thalamo:  
Hypsipyle nullos post illum sensit amores,  
ut semel Haemonio tabuit hospitio. (1.15.17-20)*

There is still the suggestion that Hypsipyle neglected her appearance in her grief; the *nec sic* reminds us that we are still concerned with Cynthia's dress and behaviour, while *tabuit*, 'wasted away', suggests that Hypsipyle's pining for Jason took a physical toll on her. This is now an only generally evocative image, though, with no signposted references to Cynthia's appearance; the focus is shifting from the contrast between her specific behaviour and that of Calypso or Hypsipyle to the more general contrast between her uncaring self-centredness and their single-minded devotion. A further refinement is added here, however: Hypsipyle never loved anyone else after Jason, but kept up for the rest of her life the extreme behaviour that, as far as we are told, Calypso maintained only for 'many days'. With the third *exemplum*, the shift from visual and particular to broadly thematic comparison is complete; no mention or suggestion of Evadne's care for her appearance is made, and would in any case seem ridiculous, considering the magnitude of her act of selfless devotion: self-immolation (1.15.21-2).<sup>34</sup> In case the Hypsipyle *exemplum* has not made the message clear enough, Propertius spells out the fact that Evadne's suicide made her the *Argiuae fama pudicitiae*: her gesture is presented not just as one of ultimate love but of ultimate faithfulness.

There have, then, been several parallel progressions from the *exemplum* of Calypso, through that of Hypsipyle, to that of Evadne. There has been an escalation in the subject matter, in that we have gone from a story of several days' unkempt lamentation, through one of perpetual grieving, to one of refusal to go on living without one's beloved. But there have also been progressions in the structure and nature of the *exempla*: we began with a long and visual comparison, closely tied to Propertius's and Cynthia's current situation in physical particulars as well as general theme, and end with a short but evocative one, related to the

<sup>34</sup> In Euripides' *Supplikes* (1054-9), Evadne comes to her husband's funeral dressed as if for a festival; reluctance to evoke this image might also explain Propertius's omission of any mention of her appearance. On self-immolation, see also below, pg. 225-6.

situation only in its broader thematic implications. The result is a smooth and complete transition, from the idea that Cynthia's concern with her adornment at a time when she is in danger of losing Propertius suggests her selfishness and lack of concern for his plight, to the idea that it proves complete lack of love and the intent to be unfaithful to him. In short, the *exempla* and their structure, despite the emotionally fraught tone of the poem as a whole, are cleverly calculated to support Propertius's rather extreme suggestion that Cynthia has, simply by doing her hair, perpetrated the worst betrayal he has ever experienced at her hands (1.15.1-2).

Once this has been achieved, Propertius immediately turns the *exempla* from precedents inserted to bolster his interpretation of the level of Cynthia's *cultus* into role models of which she should already have been aware: if only she had chosen to live by their example, she could have been a role model in her own right (*quarum nulla tuos potuit conuertere mores, / tu quoque uti fieres nobilis historia*, 1.15.23-4). The implication is that she would have achieved this by being immortalised in Propertius's own poetry. As it is, the couplet suggests, her uncaring nature and lack of fidelity will be immortalised instead, and her story will live on only as a cautionary example. There is at this point a sudden change of topic, to Cynthia's untruthfulness, but this new grievance is not utterly unrelated to what has come before. In ignoring her past oaths, Cynthia risks punishment from the gods, and thus shows a lack of due care for her own safety – and, by extension, that of Propertius (*audax a nimium, nostro dolitura periclo, / si quid forte tibi durius inciderit!* 1.15.27-8). As before, she is demonstrating a lack of proper concern and seriousness in the face of a dangerous situation. The idea that any misfortune Cynthia should suffer as a result of her broken oaths will make Propertius suffer as well<sup>35</sup> leads into a pair of *adynata* by which Propertius proclaims his own devotion, in implied contrast to her indifference (1.15.29-31), capped by a

<sup>35</sup> For *nostro dolitura periclo* meaning something like 'you will suffer, which will make me suffer too' (and recalling the mysterious *periculum* of line 3), see Bailey 1956: *ad loc.*; Hubbard 1974: 32; Richardson 1976: *ad loc.*

statement of resignation to any wrong Cynthia might commit, save leaving him for someone else (1.15.32). By these expressions of eternal affection, Propertius aligns himself with the behaviour of Calypso, Hypsipyle, and Evadne, and re-emphasises Cynthia's failure to base her conduct on theirs. They exemplified the elegiac virtues of love and devotion even to the point of self-neglect and self-destruction, and so does he; he has subtly suggested that his own behaviour, too, should be an *exemplum* for her.<sup>36</sup>

Much as in 1.2, Propertius has here taken the traditional, negative associations of *cultus*, this time the selfishness and *leuitas* suggested by excessive and minute attention to one's appearance, and especially to one's hairstyle, and used them to encourage not traditional virtues, but elegiac ones. As in the former poem, this suggests a desire to legitimise the life of love and the behaviours that ideally go with it (here, selfless and obsessive devotion to one's beloved) by associating them with more standard virtues – not through any shared characteristics, but through the fact that they are both set in opposition to the same vices and failings. The similarities of these two poems, though, should not lull us into the sense that Propertius presents only one view on *cultus* and its associated moral issues, or that he always does so in the same way. Disapproval of *cultus* is also an important theme in 2.18.23-38 and 3.14, but Propertius's treatment of the theme in these poems differs markedly from that in 1.2 and 1.15. The former (2.18.23-38) is addressed to Cynthia, and complains more directly and aggressively than ever about her adornments, which now involve not merely pointless luxuries, but an even more artificial measure, that is presented as both ugly and deceitful: hair-dye. The latter (3.14) praises Sparta over Rome, based on the liberal ideas about the intermingling of the sexes in Sparta, contrasted with the excessive concern over appearances plaguing Rome. Both deal in a witty manner with the connection between *cultus*, artificiality, and deception, the one by emphasising the ridiculous aspects of

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<sup>36</sup> See Mathews 2002: 40-4. Drawing a parallel between himself and the earlier *exempla* also, of course, puts Propertius in a feminine role; on this gender reversal, see Flaschenriem 1998: 52.

artificial beautification, and the other by suggesting the complete honesty of nudity as an equally exaggerated alternative.

In 2.18.23-38,<sup>37</sup> as in 1.2, the subject is the destruction of natural beauty wreaked by artificial adornment, but here, where the idea is the main thrust of the passage rather than the pretext for a different, subtextual message, it is exaggerated and made humorous. Whereas in 1.2 the descriptions that open the poem make Cynthia's adornments sound luxurious and attractive, thus emphasising the even greater attractiveness of what they mask, hair-dyeing is here made to sound not only misguided, but unattractive, boorish, and wrong. It is compared to the woad with which the Britons dye themselves blue,<sup>38</sup> both explicitly (2.18.23-4), and implicitly, in the taunt *an, si caeruleo quaedam sua tempora fuco / tinxerit, idcirco caerulea forma bona est?* (2.18.31-2). This makes it seem barbaric rather than a symptom of over-refinement – or, rather, draws a humorous parallel between barbarism and over-refinement. Explanations of what genuine practice might be suggested by 2.18.31-2 have included the use of excessive Egyptian-style eye-shadow, and tracing the blue veins on one's temples with makeup.<sup>39</sup> The proximity of a reference to the woad-stained Britons, though, suggests something rather more extreme, and the exaggerated force of the curse at 2.18.27-8, praying for terrible punishments in the Underworld for 'any foolish woman who deceitfully changes her hair-colour' (2.18.27-8), demands an image here that reflects the hyperbolic and humorous tone of the poem: a fantastical image rather than one that reflects any actual or even plausible contemporary fashion. We should then probably imagine something more

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<sup>37</sup> The text of '2.18' is in a rather sorry state, such that it is unclear how many poems it consists of, where each begins and ends, how much is missing, and in what order its couplets should be taken. This being the case, I shall not be considering structure or thought-progression in too much depth. I take lines 23-38 as belonging to one (probably incomplete) poem, separate from the rest of '2.18'. Most editors and commentators (including Rothstein, Barber, Camps, Richardson, Goold, and Heyworth) separate this section at least from lines 1-20, though opinion about which part 21-2 belongs to (if either) is more divided. For more on the division of 2.18, see below, pg. 166 n.96.

<sup>38</sup> See for example Caes. *Bell. Gall.* 5.14; note that, according to Caesar, this dyeing makes them look *horridiores*.

<sup>39</sup> Richardson 1976: *ad loc.*, and Walton 1946: 68, respectively.

along the lines of blue face-paint or, more likely, blue hair-dye.<sup>40</sup> The choice of blue in particular, as well as echoing the reference to woad, emphasises the unnatural aspect of the hair-dye that Cynthia is already using: lightening or reddening dark hair,<sup>41</sup> it suggests, is just as unnatural and as frightful in appearance as colouring one's hair blue would be. This is a more forceful version of the sentiment expressed at 2.18.25-6 (*ut natura dedit, sic omnis recta figura est: / turpis Romano Belgicus ore color*): what is natural is best, and what is artificial is ugly. Note that this phrase also recalls the idea implicit in lines 23-4, that Cynthia's natural hair colour is 'Roman', and therefore civilised and refined compared to her artificial hair colour, which (ironically, considering it is a manifestation of *cultus*) makes her look like a barbarian Gaul.<sup>42</sup> As in 1.2, then, the speaker communicates a preference not only for nature, but, almost paradoxically, also for certain types of cultivation, provided that they suggest only sophistication, and not pointless luxury. The choice of hair-dyeing as the focus of the poem, as opposed to the use of make-up, for example (another favourite target of anti-cosmetic sentiments), supports this message of moderation in *cultus*, in its various senses: hair is the perfect example of an area in which a certain degree of *cultus* is required, but excess can easily become ridiculous. The message of the poem is not confined to the expression of a preference for moderation, however: the alternative behaviour that is suggested is not virtuous restraint, but showing the speaker some affection (*mi formosa sat est, si modo saepe uenis*, 2.18.30). Most of the poem might pass easily enough for a genuine diatribe against the immoral conduct suggested by artificial beautifications. By suggesting

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<sup>40</sup> See Paley 1872: *ad loc.*; Camps 1967: *ad loc.*; Goold (1999), who translates 'stained her forehead with azure dye'; and Bradley 2009: 175. Taking it to refer to hair-dye need not mean that *tempora* is eccentrically being used to mean 'head'; for *tempora* dampened by liquids poured on the hair, see Tib.1.7.50-1; 2.2.7; [Tib.] 3.6.63. At 2.18.31, it perhaps suggests the staining of the skin around the hairline that reveals a poor dye job.

<sup>41</sup> This is, I think, what we must imagine that Cynthia has been doing, given the mention of *Belgicus color* at 2.18.26. The proximity of the aging theme that is central to 2.18.5-20 (see below, pg. 166-71) might tempt us to think that she is dyeing her hair to hide grey, but this is never clearly implied, so I think we must interpret her choice as based on fashion only. On hair-dyeing in Rome, see Mannsperger 1998: 25-7; Olson 2008: 72-3.

<sup>42</sup> Whether *Belgicus color* refers to the natural blond or red hair of Northern tribes, or to the dye that the Gauls are said to have used to artificially lighten and redden their hair (see Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* 28.191; Ov. *Ars* 3.163), the phrase must be seen, when juxtaposed with *Romanus*, to imply a certain provinciality, if not barbarity. On hair colour and national/ethnic identity, see Bradley 2009: 137-50; Santucci 2011: 114-21.

that the honesty and natural behaviour being encouraged consists not of modest virtue and simplicity, but of availability without coquettish delays, refusals, or game-playing, however, Propertius reveals the ulterior motive of his adoption of the tropes of traditional moralising. As in 1.2 and 1.15, it is clear that elegiac rather than conventional virtues are the ones being praised.

A similarly light and humorous delivery is seen in 3.14, which argues for the same natural and honest behaviour in the interactions between lovers; hair imagery is not a main focus of the poem, as it is in 2.18.23-38, but does contribute to its central message at a couple of key points. The first line of the poem (*Multa tuae, Sparte, miramur iura palaestrae*, 3.14.1) suggests that we are about to be presented with a moralising take on the manly virtues encouraged by the Spartan system,<sup>43</sup> but Propertius at once goes on to explain that the most attractive aspect of Spartan culture is the fact that it allows the sexes to exercise together naked. Spartan girls are allowed to compete alongside the men, even in violent contact sports (3.14.2-10). The fact that they also get military training (3.14.11-12) leads to a comparison with the Amazons; given that they fought bare-breasted (3.14.13), this keeps the nudity theme going. A Spartan girl can also go hunting, running about Taygetus *crines aspersa pruina*, ‘her hair sprinkled with frost’ (3.14.15-16): a lovely image, which all at once suggests the harsh weather conditions that the girl does not mind enduring, the length of time that she has spent following her hounds (long enough for her breath to condense and freeze on her hair), and her lack of concern for her appearance.<sup>44</sup> The image of the young Helen, unashamed to stand armed but topless in the presence of her brothers (3.14.17-20), sums up the main themes of the poem up to this point: the mixing of the sexes without shame, even in nakedness, and the encouragement of active and essentially masculine behaviour among women rather than daintiness and coyness. Helen makes a fitting final example, not only

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<sup>43</sup> As at Sen. *Ben.* 5.3, for example.

<sup>44</sup> See Hohenwallner 2001: 69.

because she is Spartan, but because, while the image itself is perfectly innocent – the boys with whom she is unashamed to be naked are, after all, her own brothers – Helen’s later adventurous history suggests the advantages for future admirers that the Spartan girls’ lack of shame will have. This hints at the answer to why Propertius should so particularly approve of women engaging in all these active pursuits alongside men (beyond the obvious visual appeal). The comfortable and open Spartan policy applies not only to youthful exercise, but to the behaviour of lovers, who go about side by side without shame, and need not fear jealous husbands (3.14.21-6).

This is, of course, an exaggerated and highly selective picture of Spartan society. Though it does draw on what seem to have been commonly held beliefs about the Sparta of the past,<sup>45</sup> these are related in such a way as to make them as titillating as possible. The result is essentially the Sparta of Propertius’s fantasy, and one calculated to provide a contrast with the Rome of his own experience, as becomes clear in the final section of the poem. The link to the picture of contemporary Rome which Propertius goes on to draw consists of a reference to the same excessively elaborate *cultus* described in 1.2 and 1.15: in Sparta, *nec Tyriae uestes errantia lumina fallunt, / est neque odoratae cura molesta comae*<sup>46</sup> (3.14.27-8). The simplicity of Spartan dress and hairdressing is directly linked to their general openness, in contrast to the deceptive luxury of Roman women.<sup>47</sup> This reflects back on the naked girls of the first section of the poem: their conduct is both admirable, because it shows ultimate honesty, and practical for would-be lovers, because it hides nothing. Hence also the inclusion of the image of the girl going out hunting until her hair gets frosty, which may seem an odd

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<sup>45</sup> On Spartan women being trained alongside men, see Eur. *Andr.* 595ff.; Xen. *Const. Lac.* 1.4; Plut. *Lyc.* 14.2; Cic. *Tusc.* 2.36. On the Spartan custom of allowing women to sleep with men other than their husbands for the purposes of eugenics – which was, according to Plutarch, misunderstood by outsiders as a sign of licentiousness – see Xen. *Const. Lac.* 1.7-9; Plut. *Lyc.* 15.6-10.

<sup>46</sup> The MSS have *domi*, but this is pretty universally acknowledged to be a mistake.

<sup>47</sup> The simplicity of Spartan women’s hairdressing seems to have been proverbial; at Hor. *Carm.* 2.11.23-4, a quick and practical hairstyle is referred to as ‘Spartan’. On hair and its symbolic value in Sparta, see David 1992.

one out in the list of otherwise naked exercises. The connection, beyond the link provided by healthy exercise, is that she does not care about the *cultus* of her hair, and thus, like the naked girls, has a natural and honest appearance. The Roman women, by contrast, are so dressed up that one cannot tell which ones would still be attractive under all the adornments, and which would not. This is closely connected to the annoyance at women's total inaccessibility in public that the speaker expresses next (3.14.29-32). The *cura molesta* that the women lavish on their hair (3.14.28) unites the two ideas; why should their degree of interest in their hair be so 'annoying', unless by contrast to their lack of interest in their admirers? The final couplet (3.14.33-4) suggests a solution to all these problems, finally making explicit the humorous and irreverent idea that has been latent throughout: if only Roman women and men could exercise naked together freely, things would be more pleasant all around.<sup>48</sup>

In both 2.18.23-38 and 3.14, then, Propertius continues the trend seen in 1.2 and 1.15, of associating excessive care for one's appearance with its traditional, negative implications – now, specifically its deceitful and artificial nature, as well as the distraction it represents from more important concerns – and contrasting the resulting picture with the ideals of elegiac love affairs. In these poems, though, since honesty is not a uniquely elegiac virtue, but a traditional one as well, the twist lies in the fact that Propertius stretches the idea of honesty to include openness in the sense of sexual availability. Of course, sexual availability and honesty in the way one presents one's physical appearance, despite the elegant way in which Propertius manages to suggest a connection, are not equivalent in any serious way. But the light tone and humorously exaggerated imagery in both poems make clear that we are not to take the gaps in his argument too seriously. The suggestion that paying attention to one's lover is more important than paying attention to one's hairstyle strains logic less, but equally skews the usual intent of the anti-cosmetic sentiments being called upon as support.

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<sup>48</sup> As lovemaking is often described in terms of battle or wrestling, there is an even more irreverent double meaning suggested here; see Nethercut 1970: 100-2.

Propertius presents his anti-traditionalist ideas, then, by much the same means here as in the earlier poems, initially disguising them as and setting them alongside traditionalist ones, only to reverse this apparent similarity; he simply does so here in a more light-hearted manner. Given this lightness relative to the carefully rhetorical 1.2 and the anguished 1.15, Propertius in 2.18.23-38 and 3.14 also ignores his lover-persona's disillusionment with the realities behind his elegiac ideals, and instead presents him as only frustrated with women's greater concentration on display (as represented by their ornate, or dyed, or perfumed hairstyles) than on actually allowing him to get near them. Despite this difference in tone, though, both his more serious and lighter treatments of *cultus* and the relationship between traditional virtues and elegiac ones emphasise the paradoxical similarities and inability to coexist of the two value systems.

The attitude of Propertius's lover-poet persona towards feminine adornments plays an important but rather different role in two further poems: 2.1 and 2.3. At first glance, the use Propertius makes of *cultus* and its moral implications in these poems seems inconsistent with that in the poems already discussed. He again describes Cynthia's fine clothes and styled hair, but these here prompt none of the anxiety, distress, or frustration that they do in those poems. They are instead grouped with Cynthia's other attractions – including the natural beauties that they had been divorced from in 1.2 – in lists of the attributes that inspire Propertius's poetry (2.1.5-16) and attract him to her (2.3.9-22). Both poems are essentially explanations and defences of Propertius's inability to quit Cynthia, and in each case there is a third-party addressee, in the form of the more than usually characterised reader, who is fed opinions for Propertius to respond to, at 2.1.1-2 and 2.3.1-4. It is thus not surprising that the moral implications of *cultus*, which might damage his arguments in favour of his devotion, do not intrude. What is rather surprising is that, so early in his second book, he should choose to emphasise attractions that had been the focus of whole poems' worth of disapproving rhetoric

in the preceding book. However, the specific aspects of Cynthia's adornments that receive attention (including her beautifully styled hair), and the role these play in the catalogues of which they form a part, demonstrate that what we are seeing here is not a simple change of opinion to accompany a change in narrative circumstance, but a complex manipulation of the associations laid down in the previous book.

It is clear from the beginning that 2.1 is to be programmatic in nature. The first 16 lines explain the source of the poet's inspiration (and thus, by extension, the nature of his poetry), in answer to a question imagined to have been posed by the readership at large (*Quaeritis unde mihi totiens scribantur amores, / unde meus ueniat mollis in ora liber*, 2.1.1-2). Paraphrased questions of this sort, suggesting that a poem is a response to a specific request for information, are common enough,<sup>49</sup> but this one ('What makes you write all these love elegies all the time?') is more antagonistic than most, and Propertius's response is correspondingly defiant. His inspiration is not the god or muse that the readership might have expected, but his beloved herself (2.1.1-4) and her various charms (2.1.5-16). By denying inspiration from Apollo or Calliope, Propertius, while acknowledging the poetic tradition, sets himself and his style of elegy apart from it, emphasising its personal nature above all.<sup>50</sup> This prepares us for the introduction, in line 17, of Maecenas (the 'patron' figure and representative of distinctly public poetry to whom the rest of the poem is to be addressed),<sup>51</sup> and for the sentiment that guides the rest of the poem: Propertius's insistence on

<sup>49</sup> For example, Catull. 7, Prop. 1.22, 2.31, and 3.13 all begin in this way.

<sup>50</sup> Hesiod, in claiming inspiration by the Muses, names Calliope as the greatest of the nine (*Theog.* 1-28, 76-9; the former passage is echoed in Prop. 3.3). Callimachus likewise credits Apollo and the Muses with his inspiration (see *Aet.* 1 and 2 *passim*; lyric fr. 228.1-4 (Pfeiffer)). The trope of invoking divine aid was alive and well in Propertius's time, particularly when the 'seriousness' of one's poetic undertaking needed to be stressed – see for example Verg. *Ecl.* 4.1 (*Sicelides Musae, paulo maiora canamus*); 4.53-7; *Georg.* 4.6-7. Note that Propertius does elsewhere claim to be inspired by Apollo and/or Calliope (Prop. 1.8.41; 3.2.9-16; 3.3).

<sup>51</sup> Many critics' interpretations of 2.1 depend on the idea that Propertius produced his first book with the support of the Tullus addressed in 1.1, 1.6, 1.14, 1.22, and 3.22 (thought to be the nephew of L. Volcacius Tullus, cos. 33 BCE), but produced at least books two and three under the patronage of Maecenas. See for example Hubbard 1974: 100-2; Sullivan 1976: 126; Stahl 1985: 162-4; Cairns 2006: 250-94, especially 261-67. There is, however, no evidence for this outside of the poems themselves. As even this evidence is ambiguous (Propertius is hardly flattering to either Tullus or Maecenas, and never clearly states that he is receiving their patronage), it

his own unsuitability for producing the epics that such a patron might want. It here becomes clear that the poem is not only programmatic, but a *recusatio*. One of the main purposes of the introductory passage, then, is to preface the rejection of epic with a distinctive and positive picture of love elegy, with Cynthia and her adornments and accomplishments standing for the genre and its virtues.<sup>52</sup> While the rejection of divine aid in favour of the inspiration that Cynthia provides suggests the personal and subjective nature of Propertius's elegy in general terms, his choice of what specific attractions to ascribe to Cynthia as Muse of Elegy, and how to describe them, makes more specific points about how Propertius perceives his poetic project, and would like it to be perceived by others.

This brings us to Propertius's approval of Cynthia's delicate imported clothing and styled hair. The characteristics of each stand in for elements of his poetic project as much as for aspects of her character, and so there is no room for any of the negative implications of promiscuity, greed for gifts, or *leuitas* (in a negative sense, at least) that were seen in 1.2 or 1.15. Nonetheless, Cynthia's silky dress is the first of her attributes to be singled out as a source of inspiration – *siue illam Cois fulgentem incedere cerno*,<sup>53</sup> / *totum de Coa ueste uolumen erit* (2.1.5-6). The image of her walking along in her finery directly recalls 1.2.2 (*Quid iuuat . . . / . . . tenues Coa ueste mouere sinus?*). However, whereas in 1.2 the surface meaning had been that Cynthia's silk dress hides the natural beauty of her own skin, here, any such idea is suppressed by the fact that it is Cynthia herself who strikes the eye, shining (*fulgentem*) through the semi-transparent fabric. The other implication of Cynthia's Coan dress in 1.2, its allusion to Philitas of Cos, here takes centre stage, given added prominence

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seems likely that Propertius is instead exploiting the idea of literary patronage for poetic effect. I shall thus be treating Maecenas's request for an epic from Propertius as real only within the fictional narrative context of the poem. Critics questioning the reality of Maecenas's role as patron in this poem, and the role of patrons in Propertius's poetry generally, include (in increasing order of scepticism) Gold (1987: 156-64), Zetzel (1982: 89ff., especially 98) and Heyworth (2007a, especially 101-8).

<sup>52</sup> On the elegiac mistress as a metaphor for love elegy itself, see especially Wyke 1987, 1989, and 1989a (=2002: 46-77, 115-54, 11-45). On 2.1 in particular, see Wiggers 1977: 335-6; Zetzel 1983: 91-3.

<sup>53</sup> On this reading of line 5, suggested by Leo, see Heyworth 2007: 104-6.

by the repetition of the adjective, and its explicit association with a book of poetry.<sup>54</sup> The evocative image of a book physically made of the Coan silk that inspired it, then, implies the delicacy and the refined nature of the poetry contained in it in two ways at once: by association with the fine and delicate nature of the fabric itself, and by association with Philitas, whose poetry was said to exemplify the same qualities. If Cynthia's dress and her body are thus taken as symbols of medium and subject matter, the dress's transparency becomes vividly suggestive of elegy's paradoxical ability to communicate the 'real' through self-conscious artistry.

The next source of inspiration for Propertius is Cynthia's hair: *seu uidi ad frontem sparsos errare capillos, / gaudet laudatis ire superba comis* (2.1.7-8). The word *sparsus*, applied to hair, ordinarily means 'flowing loose'.<sup>55</sup> However, the phrase is somewhat peculiar, if it is meant to describe a head of hair lying completely loose. Most distinctively, the hair is described as being scattered over the forehead, rather than the neck or shoulders.<sup>56</sup> When we add *errare* to this picture, suggesting that Cynthia's hair has strayed onto her forehead from wherever it was originally placed, and consider the element of dynamism provided by *ad*,<sup>57</sup> it seems that we should instead imagine not a full head of loose hair, but individual locks escaping from the edges of an otherwise (apparently) orderly hairstyle, that move and bounce when Cynthia walks.<sup>58</sup> The idea that this is the kind of inspiration he

<sup>54</sup> See Zetzel 1983: 92; Miller 2001: 140. Propertius plays on the same association elsewhere. At Prop. 4.5.57-8, the *lena* warns that a poet will attempt to give poems to his beloved, instead of silk dresses (*qui uersus Coae dederit nec munera uestis . . .*); though *uersus* and *Coae* do not agree, the proximity of the two words and the hyperbaton of *Coae* and *uestis* hint at the pun. On this passage, see Heyworth 1986: 209-10. At 4.2.23, too, when Vertumnus, describing his shape-shifting abilities, boasts *indue me Cois: fiam non dura puella*, he could as easily mean 'put me in a love elegy and I shall become an accommodating mistress' as 'dress me in silk and I shall become a weak girl'. The passage is not explicitly about poetry, but the phrase *dura puella* has a strong elegiac ring to it, and Vertumnus does seem aware that he is speaking in metre (*sex suberunt uersus*, 4.2.57).

<sup>55</sup> OLD, s. u. *spargo*, 2b.

<sup>56</sup> A PHI search for derivatives of *spargo* in the vicinity of *frons* yielded no parallel examples.

<sup>57</sup> All other uses of the phrase *ad frontem* I can find describe something moving towards or across the forehead, rather than something lying on it; see for example Cic. *in Pison.* 14.6; Ov. *Met.* 15.567. Granted, Propertius does sometimes use *ad* in place of other, expected prepositions (especially *in*), with no clear purpose or desired effect; see Enk 1962: *ad* 2.1.7.

<sup>58</sup> Compare 2.22.9-10. For an example of a hairstyle incorporating both bound sections and loose individual locks, see Bartman 1999: 34, fig. 29. For the erotic appeal of such a style in an era when tidily symmetrical

favours anticipates Propertius's statement, later in the poem, of a preference for small, intimate details over big, dramatic subject matter, as he aligns himself with Callimachus, whose 'narrow breast' does not permit him to 'thunder' on the larger-than-life subjects demanded by epic (2.1.39-42).<sup>59</sup> How can Propertius be expected to take on such subjects, when as it stands, individual locks of hair (never mind whole hairstyles) are enough to keep him busy? One might also suggest, again in the context of a discussion of poetic inspiration, and following on the heels of the allusion to Philitas, that the image of Cynthia's 'wandering locks' recalls Callimachus's *Coma Berenices* (*Aet.* fr.110);<sup>60</sup> such an allusion would reinforce these general implications of Callimachean smallness of scope. The second line of the couplet (*gaudet laudatis ire superba comis*), meanwhile, has its own implications, suggesting that his beloved's appreciation of his poetry and its focus on her is as much a part of what inspires and encourages Propertius as her beauty itself.<sup>61</sup> This ties in to one of the elegiac virtues that Propertius espouses elsewhere: a preference for love over wealth or the other advantages of a public career, and the desire to achieve fame on his own terms.<sup>62</sup> The benefits of pleasing his mistress with his poetry are more attractive to him than the benefits of pleasing a patron: an important idea to establish before the *recusatio* itself begins.

Propertius's descriptions of the rest of Cynthia's attractions act in a similar way to those of her dress and hair, implying that the characteristics of elegy subsume and surpass those of other genres – his admiration of her elegance and skill in playing the lyre (2.1.9-10) is a nod to lyric poetry; his claim to 'find a thousand new inspirations' in Cynthia nodding off to sleep (2.1.11-12) is another instance of attention to fine detail and preference for private and

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styles predominated, compare Hogarth's eighteenth-century observation that 'a lock of hair falling cross the temples, and by that means breaking the regularity of the oval, has an effect too alluring to be strictly decent' (1997: 39). See also Rifelj 2010: 48-9, and below, pg. 184-5.

<sup>59</sup> An allusion to Callimachus's fr. 1.20 Pfeiffer, βροντᾶν οὐκ ἔμῳν, ἀλλὰ Διός. On the delicate body of the poet as a metaphor for his 'slender' verse-style, see Keith 1999: 52-3.

<sup>60</sup> See the introductory chapter, pg. 13 n.31.

<sup>61</sup> For Cynthia's appreciation of his poetry as an important motivation and reassurance, see Prop. 2.13.11-12; 2.24.21-2; 2.26.25-6; 3.2.2.

<sup>62</sup> See for example Prop. 1.14; 2.7; 2.13.1-38; 2.14.21-4; 2.15.41-6; 3.5; 3.7.71-2. Zetzel (1983: 92) suggests that *laudatis comis* also works as a bilingual pun on ἐγκώμιον.

subjective subject matter; and the idea that he composes ‘long Iliads’ to recount their lovemaking (2.1.13-14) plants the idea that these elegiac ‘battle scenes’ are preferable to actual epic.<sup>63</sup> In the couplet that sums up the passage (*seu quicquid fecit, siue est quodcumque locuta, / maxima de nihilo nascitur historia*, 2.1.16), under the self-deprecatory cloak of suggesting that the things that inspire him are unimportant compared to those that inspire epic, Propertius emphasises the minute and personal quality of several of the observations listed, and thus his own skill in deriving not only whole books of poetry from them, but ones that are comparable to epics filled with personalities and events of historical significance.<sup>64</sup>

The list of attractions is not purely symbolic, of course; it works just as comfortably when taken as praise of Cynthia as a character in the narrative, rather than as the embodiment of the genre. Even on this level, though, it would be injudicious for Propertius to bring up the moral failings of the muse for whom he is choosing to dismiss Maecenas’s preference for epic – note that, even as the poem moves into visions of death from incurable love, and touches on the theme (examined in 1.2 and 1.15 with *cultus* as its vehicle) of the two-sided attitude of the elegiac lover to the life he pursues, it is only Cynthia’s more socially acceptable *duritia* that is imagined as the cause of Propertius’s fate (2.1.71-8), not her infidelity and lying, as at 1.15.41. Hence the focus in his description of her adornments on only the fine weave of her dress and the element of slight disorder in her hairstyle, to the exclusion of any mention of expensive jewellery and perfumes, or excessive restyling. In short, though 2.1 covers a lot of the same ground as the two earlier poems, in describing Cynthia’s *cultus* and in presenting the speaker as dealing with both the attractive and the more miserable aspects of his lot, the two subjects cannot here be combined in the same way as they were before. The simple fact that Propertius avoids mentioning not only the negative

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<sup>63</sup> For more such references and allusions, see Wiggers 1977: 135-6; Zetzel 1983: 91-3; Miller 2001: 136-41.

<sup>64</sup> On the implications of *historia* here, see Stahl 1985: 163-4.

implications of Cynthia's level of *cultus*, but even the aspects of it that might suggest these implications, demonstrates that he remains aware of and continues to manipulate the traditional associations between women's *cultus* and morality.

Similar factors influence Propertius's approval of Cynthia's fine clothes and elegant hairstyle in 2.3. Whereas in 2.1 Propertius is pre-emptively defending elegy in comparison to epic, in 2.3, he defends himself against a charge of susceptibility, and of failing to keep to a resolution to abandon the life of love. Again, he does so by listing Cynthia's attractions, but these are now divided into two distinct categories: it is not so much her physical beauties and lovely adornments – her complexion, her hairstyle, her eyes, her fine clothes – that have such an irresistible pull, he claims, though these are powerful (2.3.9-16), but her artistic accomplishments: dancing, musical ability, and poetic taste (17-22). Much as in 1.2, then, the appeal of adornments, though enthusiastically acknowledged, is subordinated to that of artistic talent. What is different here is the relative status of natural beauties (complexion, eyes), which are now set on an equal footing with artificial ones (hairstyle, clothes), rather than set against them in the same category as artistic talents. It would have been easy enough to divide the list into the same two categories into which they fall in 1.2, without damage to the argument that Propertius goes on to derive from it, that Cynthia's gifts are god-given, and cannot be resisted by mere mortals (2.3.23-8). Why, then, has Propertius here chosen to group the natural and artificial beauties together?

As in 2.1, the answer has partly to do with the poem's imagined audience. It is unclear who is meant to speak the first four lines of 2.3:

*Qui nullam tibi dicebas iam posse nocere,  
 haesisti; cecidit spiritus ille tuus.  
 uix unum potes, infelix, requiescere mensem,  
 et turpis de te iam liber alter erit.*

Commentators are divided,<sup>65</sup> and the poem does not provide an explicit answer, but I would suggest that, just as the second person plural that opens 2.1 (*Quaeritis*) puts words in the mouths of the readership, to provide motivation for the ‘response’ that follows, these lines are the reaction that Propertius anticipates from his readers, who had expected him to abandon love and love poetry after his first book, but have seen no such change.<sup>66</sup> The catalogue of Cynthia’s attractions, then, is a response to this accusation of weakness, and its primary purpose is to justify Propertius’s inability to resist her, by shifting the blame from his weakness to her power. The division of her attractions into a hierarchy, with those depending primarily on visual and physical appeal subordinated to those depending also on artistic and poetic taste, makes the picture complimentary to Propertius: his resolve has in the end been defeated not by appeals to his lust, but to his refined tastes. The implicit message is that a lesser artist might have been drawn only by the former, but not one as cultured as Propertius, who needed more. The principle of organisation in the list is thus not the separation of inherent charms from external ones, but of those with purely visual and tactile appeal from those also requiring artistic appreciation. Hence also the progression in the second list of attractions from the most physical, dancing (2.3.17-18), through the middle-ground of lyre-playing (2.3.19-20), to the most cerebral, poetic skill and taste (2.3.21-2).<sup>67</sup> The poem’s themes are not so different from those of 1.2 as they may have seemed.

If Cynthia is to be ultimately irresistible, though, even her ‘lesser’ charms must be

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<sup>65</sup> Neither Butler & Barber (1933) nor Richardson (1976) are prepared to make a firm statement on the subject, but both favour the idea of Propertius addressing himself; Rothstein (1920) and Camps (1967) take the same stance, but with more confidence. Giardina (1977) finds it more likely that lines 1-4 are spoken by a (fictitious) friend of the main speaker.

<sup>66</sup> Why the reader should have expected Propertius to abandon love and love-poetry is not clear; the promise that he has apparently made (*dicebas . . .*) does not obviously correspond to any passage in an earlier poem. Contrast 2.24.1-2, an interjection by the reader prompted by what has come immediately before (see Allen 1962: 121-8). It is of course possible that the real-life readership of Propertius’s first book had reason to expect him to change tack in his next offering (this would also explain their surprise at finding book two full of love poems, prompting 2.1.1-2). It is at least as likely, however, that the promise is another fiction, comparable to that of Maecenas’s request for an epic in 2.1.

<sup>67</sup> As Heyworth suggests (2007: 122), *sua scripta* is ambiguous enough that either Cynthia’s own skill in writing poetry, her good taste in appreciating Propertius’s poems in praise of her, or both could be meant. For her ‘ownership’ of verses written for her, compare the dead Cynthia’s proprietary feelings over them at 4.7.77-8.

made to sound as attractive as possible. This is of course flattering to Cynthia, but it also magnifies Propertius's achievement in resisting a relapse even for a month. There is less credit in being 'caught' only by the features you like (which demonstrates no resistance at all) than there is in resisting extremely attractive charms, only to be defeated in the end by irresistible ones. This is, of course, all rather facetious too, and lets the speaker have it both ways, relishing the enumeration of all Cynthia's attractions, while maintaining the moral high ground by claiming to have been genuinely conquered only by her artistic accomplishments.<sup>68</sup> He thus makes no attempt to downplay the force of the attractions in the first half of the list; on the contrary, he describes them in a highly evocative manner, conjuring up connotations and sense imagery beyond the visual. Cynthia's lily-whiteness (2.3.9-10), for example, evokes the grace and perfume of the flower. The description of the flow of her hair over her neck (*de more comae per leuia colla fluentes*, 2.3.13), meanwhile, is a tactile image, drawing more attention to Cynthia's smooth skin than to her hairstyle itself, which is sketched in only the vaguest terms. The description of her clothes, which rounds off the list (*Arabo lucet bombyce puella*, 2.3.15), just as that of her hairstyle emphasises her neck more than her hair, draws attention not so much to her dress as to its contents. It is not the material itself that is shining, but Cynthia's skin.<sup>69</sup> As at 2.1.5, this suppresses the idea of the artificial concealment of beauty represented by clothing – this time, not so much for the purpose of suppressing negative implications, as to unite the attractive force of garment and wearer. The titillating effect of the line is increased if we accept Dorville's conjecture of *papilla* for *puella*;<sup>70</sup> Propertius generally uses the word in reference to genuinely naked breasts (2.15.5; 3.14.19; 4.3.43). Note also that Cynthia's dress is here made of Arabian silk,

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<sup>68</sup> Compare Propertius's description of his own liability to be captivated by elaborate hairstyles and revealing clothes (2.22.7-10), in a poem in which he takes on a less idealistic (and less idealised) persona. For the humorously ironic edge of 2.3.9-22, see Papanghelis 1987: 56-7.

<sup>69</sup> For this way of describing see-through clothes, compare Lucan, *Bell. Ciu.* 10.141 (*candida Sidonio perlucent pectora filo*); Mart. 8.68.7 (*femineum lucet sic per bombycina corpus*).

<sup>70</sup> Supported by Liberman (1992: 337-8) and Heyworth (2007: 120-1).

not Coan as before, so that no metapoetic interpretation of the appeal of her see-through garment is encouraged.<sup>71</sup>

It should by now be apparent that this description of Cynthia's hair and clothing does not downplay the more morally questionable aspects of her *cultus* in quite the same way as that in 2.1; it does, however, focus only on her sexual availability, and not on those associations between aspects of *cultus* and traits which are considered negative both in terms of traditional moralising and elegiac virtues, such as that between elaborate adornment and deceit, or expensive adornment and *luxuria*. This is achieved in part through calculated vagueness. The phrase *de more* does not suggest any particular hairstyle, or even any general category of hairstyle; it could mean 'in the current style' or 'in her usual style', but it is not clear which is meant (if either),<sup>72</sup> and neither can call up any specific image, in the absence of further details. All we are really told is that Cynthia's hair flows over her neck. The descriptions of Cynthia's hairstyle in 1.2 and 1.15 are equally vague in visual terms, the former saying only that it is carefully styled and anointed with Eastern perfumes (1.2.1, 3), and the latter that Cynthia has been laboriously arranging it by hand when she should have been paying attention to more serious matters (1.15.5); what distinguishes this description from those is not its lack of visual specificity, but its lack of clear connotations. The picture in 1.2 suggests Cynthia's desire to attract men and their expensive presents, and that in 1.15 suggests her *leuitas*. Nothing much is suggested by the picture of Cynthia's hairstyle in 2.3 other than its general elegance; it makes her seem attractive and touchable,<sup>73</sup> but does not characterise her any further than that.

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<sup>71</sup> Arabian silk is not mentioned elsewhere, and so it is not clear whether it is significantly different from Assyrian silk, described by Pliny at *Nat. Hist.* 11.76-8 (on the Arabian/Assyrian silk issue, see Butler & Barber 1933; Bailey 1956; Enk 1962, all *ad loc.*). Pliny's description is unreliable, mixing information derived from Aristotle and other sources in a confused manner, but, as far as can be determined, the *bombyx* was the insect responsible for both Assyrian silk and Coan; for an entomologist's perspective, see Forbes 1930.

<sup>72</sup> On *de more*, see Rothstein 1920 and Camps 1967, both *ad loc.* The phrase has no consistent meaning, and can suggest anything from 'in good order' (e.g. at *Aen.* 10.832) to 'according to custom' (e.g. at *Aen.* 3.65; 11.35).

<sup>73</sup> On the special erotic appeal of the bare neck to the Romans, see Ziegler 2000: 159.

In both 2.1 and 2.3, then, though Propertius may seem to express plain appreciation of elaborate *cultus*, and to ignore the moral implications that dominate 1.2 and 1.15, a close examination of the purposes and effects of each passage reveals that he remains very aware of these implications in both poems. The difference is that in 2.1 and 2.3, Propertius's approach is complicated by the addition of an outside personality, with priorities external to the context of the lover's relationship with his mistress: the reader, who, in 2.1, has expressed surprise at Propertius's persistence in writing love poetry, and in 2.3, mocks this poetry and the susceptible lover who cannot resist producing it. Each outside force demands a shift in focus to the positive and attractive aspects of elegiac life, love, and poetry, which necessarily has an effect on the nature and purpose of the sentiments on *cultus* that arise. In neither poem, though, does Propertius ignore or change his speaker's attitude to the traditional relationship between *cultus* and morals. Instead, he acknowledges that relationship, but manoeuvres around it in such a way as to allow him both to display his preference for elegiac virtues over traditional ones, and to link these with the virtues of elegy as a genre. Despite significant variations in the tone, context, and purpose of each poem, then, Propertius's approach to women's *cultus* is consistent in its fundamental elements: manipulation of the traditional, moral implications of adornment, to fashion an independent, elegiac moral compass, and exploitation of the wider symbolism of *cultus* in the abstract, to characterise, justify, and glorify his chosen genre.

### Part 2: Tibullus and Feminine *cultus*

In the poems treating his relationships with Delia and Nemesis, Tibullus seems less interested than Propertius in the possibilities presented to the elegiac poet by the moral connotations of women's *cultus*. When he praises Delia's beauty, it is without reference to her *cultus* (Tib. 1.5.43-4); he shows an appreciation for unstyled hair, in fantasy images of

Delia letting hers loose (1.1.67-8; 1.3.29-32, 91-2),<sup>74</sup> but does not actively contrast it with over-adornment; and he decries Nemesis's selfish desire for Tyrian purple dresses and other expensive imported goods (2.3.49-58; 2.4.27-32), but without applying the same kind of complex symbolism to each item that Propertius does in 1.2 or 2.1. This is not to say that these passages are simplistic in their handling, but only that their originality and complexity do not rely on manipulation of the traditional connotations of feminine *cultus*, which are instead transplanted into an elegiac environment with little change to their basic force. Tibullus's two main Marathus poems, though, are literally a different story; in these poems he responds more actively not only to the traditional implications of *cultus*, but to the ways in which Propertius had dealt with them in his first book.<sup>75</sup>

The two passages in question may seem, in their broadest outline, to reinforce the traditional picture of *cultus*: at 1.8.9-16, Tibullus contrasts pointlessly excessive adornment with the attractiveness of unadorned beauty, and at 1.9.67-74, he uses a woman's expensive finery and attention to the styling of her hair as evidence to back up a charge of infidelity. Other aspects of 1.8 and 1.9, though, make the full implications of each passage more complex than these summaries would suggest. For one thing, the narrative of the paired poems<sup>76</sup> is more populated than that of Prop. 1.2 or 1.15, accommodating not only the poet's lover-persona and his beloved, but rivals for that beloved's affections, who, in contrast to the undifferentiated mass referred to by Propertius only as *isti*, at 1.2.25, or the imaginary *nouus uir* of 1.15.9, are described visually, characterised, and addressed at length. This larger cast

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<sup>74</sup> See below, pg. 212-18.

<sup>75</sup> For the relative chronology of Propertius and Tibullus, and analysis of some of Tibullus's other responses to Propertius's first book, see Lyne 1998: 519-33. Knox (2005) argues instead that Tibullus's first book pre-dates that of Propertius. Some of his points seem strong – his straightforward interpretations of Ov. *Tr.* 2.445-68 and 4.10.51-4, for example; both passages do imply that Propertius was thought of as coming after Tibullus in the succession of elegiac poets. As they were rough contemporaries, though, and Propertius produced at least his fourth book after Tibullus's death, this evidence is not as conclusive as it looks. Furthermore, Knox's main argument, that Tib. 1.7 anticipates Messalla's triumph of 27 BCE, rather than celebrating it as a current or recent event, is strained.

<sup>76</sup> Though the boy in 1.9 is not named as Marathus, it is a natural and, I think, fair assumption that the poem is a later chapter of the narrative of 1.8. For some of the ways in which the poems interconnect, see Powell 1974: 111-12; Murgatroyd 1977: 118; Booth 1996.

adds new dimensions to the interpersonal conflicts being played out. It is also a somewhat unconventional elegiac environment, given that Tibullus's beloved in these poems is a boy.<sup>77</sup> This alters the usual relationship dynamics, not least by allowing for two different types of rival: the girl Pholoe (introduced in 1.8), whom Tibullus's beloved Marathus is trying to woo, and an unnamed older man (introduced in 1.9), who, according to Tibullus, has seduced Marathus away with money, though the boy is still also involved with Pholoe. All these innovations and complications have their effect on the passages relating to *cultus*, layering them with subtexts for the reader to tease out and re-evaluate.

In 1.8, having in the first eight lines claimed the status of infallible expert in love, taught by Venus herself to recognise its signs, Tibullus appears to address a woman on the subject of her exaggerated *cultus*. He points out the ineffectiveness of excessive attempts at self-beautification, contrasting it with the success of the artless beauty of another woman:

*quid tibi nunc molles prodest coluisse capillos  
saepeque mutatas disposuisse comas,  
quid fuco splendente genas ornare, quid unguis  
artificis docta subsecuisse manu?  
frustra iam uestes, frustra mutantur amictus  
ansaque compressos colligat arta pedes.  
illa placet, quamuis inculto uenerit ore  
nec nitidum tarda compserit arte caput. (1.8.9-16)*

The addressee's identity is not clear, but, the object of *placet* being suppressed, the reader could be forgiven for assuming that *illa* were Delia; she was, after all, the subject of the most recent amatory poems, 1.5 and 1.6. It looks, then, as if this might be the introduction to a poem in praise of Delia's natural beauty, and about the inferior ability of other women, even by desperate artificial means, to attract lovers as easily as she has attracted Tibullus.<sup>78</sup> It eventually becomes clear, though, upon the surprise appearance of a masculine adjective

<sup>77</sup> On Tib. 1.8-9 (and 1.4) as an experiment in blending the central tropes of Latin elegy with those of Greek epigram, see James 2003a: 9-12; see also below, pg. 51 n.88.

<sup>78</sup> Compare Catull. 86; *Anth. Pal.* 5.288 (Paulus Silentiarius). Lee-Stecum (1998: 230-1) suggests that it is at first most natural to assume that Delia is the addressee, particularly since the passage echoes Prop. 1.2.1-8 (see below, pg. 51-3); this is perhaps fair, but the appearance of *illa* would soon alter (or at least complicate) this impression in any case.

(*misero*, 1.8.23), that the addressee is in fact male – and apparently not only effeminate in his dress and behaviour, but young enough to be referred to as a *puer* (1.8.27).<sup>79</sup> As for *illa*, it turns out that she is not a rival beauty, but the woman whom the youth is trying to attract with his excessive self-beautification, who will eventually be named as Pholoe. And in case the reader had not yet made the assumption, it is finally revealed, in line 49, that the boy is not just any boy, but Tibullus's own beloved, Marathus, whose aloofness had tortured him at 1.4.81-4. The paradigm shifts resulting from the delayed revelation both of the gender of the addressee of the beauty tips in lines 9-16 and, later, of his relationship to Tibullus, showcase the poet's wit, no doubt, but surely there is more going on here. As critics have pointed out, although Tibullus maintains the pose of providing helpful advice and encouragement to the young lovers throughout, his role is not as avuncular as this might suggest: his efforts instead constantly undermine Marathus's wooing of Pholoe, and encourage the boy to return to him while he is still young enough to be attractive.<sup>80</sup> Bright (1978: 242-8) and others argue for an amused yet wistful Tibullus, whose interest in the situation lies primarily in the fact that he sees his own relationship with Delia reflected in that of Marathus and Pholoe.<sup>81</sup> While this is certainly a contributing factor, it limits one's reading of the poem, oversimplifying its complex and layered nature. The various connotations of Tibullus's comments about *cultus* in lines 9-16 shape and reshape our understanding of his overall tone, as the revelation of new information forces us to re-evaluate the relative significance of those connotations. By

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<sup>79</sup> Bright (1978: 241-2) suggests that this is revealed as early as line 15, by the introduction of *illa* as the addressee's beloved; as explained above, though, with *placet* governing *no tibi*, it will not necessarily be the reader's first assumption that the addressee is the one attracted to *illa*. Luck prints *ille* (following Meier), but this does not strike me as a necessary change.

<sup>80</sup> See Bulloch 1973: 80-1, 88-9; McGann 1983: 1987-91; Booth 1996: 233-9. As McGann explains, it is important to keep in mind the sexual mores of the context in which the poem was produced. Marathus's interest in Pholoe does not mean that he is no longer attractive to or attainable by men – note that in 1.9 he has both a girlfriend and a male lover – nor are Tibullus's interest in Delia and in Marathus mutually exclusive. For contemporary examples demonstrating the overlap in young men's attractiveness to men and women, see Hor. *Carm.* 1.4.19; 3.20; Prop. 1.20. For concurrent and/or arbitrary attraction to both women and boys, see Lucr. 4.1052-5; Hor. *Sat.* 1.2.116-19; 2.3.325; *Epod.* 11.1-4, 23-8; Ov. *Am.* 1.1.20. See also Cantarella 1992: 120-41 (128-34, on Tibullus in particular); Williams 1999: 15-61, especially 19-28.

<sup>81</sup> See also Ball 1983: 132-3; Maltby 2002: 302; Verstraete 2005: 308.

withholding and then slowly revealing the full picture, Tibullus actively encourages us not to limit our reading of the poem, but instead to rethink it over and over again, leaving multiple options open in the process.<sup>82</sup>

The most striking aspect of the description of Marathus's *cultus*, of course, and the one which gives the delay of the identification of the addressee its full potency, is that it is so feminine in nature that it seems to be describing the titivations of a girl. While some of the actions listed are entirely unisex – the trimming of nails (1.8.11-12); the frequent changing of clothes (13); the wearing of tight shoes (14)<sup>83</sup> – the reader is primed to interpret these as being performed by a female by the first two items: the frequent and careful restyling of the hair (9-10), and the use of make-up (11), both of which are stereotypically feminine behaviours.<sup>84</sup> The particular description of what Marathus has been doing to his hair, too – arranging it, ‘altering’ it (probably a reference to artificial curling) – more readily suggest a woman’s hairstyle. The phrasing of the line also echoes Callimachus’s description of the repeated restyling of the same curl by Aphrodite (*saepeque mutatas disposuisse comas*, Tib. 1.8.10; *πολλάκι τὰν αὐτὰν δίς μετέθηκε κόμαν*, Callim. *Hymn* 5.22), putting a distinctly feminine image into the minds of readers sensitive to the allusion.<sup>85</sup> This impression is reinforced by the reference to make-up in the next line, so that the reader does not question the relative ambiguity of the rest of the passage, and even once the revelation is made, the air of femininity lingers, leaving us with a stronger impression of the addressee’s effeminacy

<sup>82</sup> See Lee-Stecum 1998: 233-4; 2000.

<sup>83</sup> For women’s trimmed nails, see for example Hor. *Carm.* 1.6.17-19; for men’s, see Ov. *Ars* 1.519. For women’s attention to their dress, see Ov. *Ars* 3.169ff.; for men’s, see Ov. *Ars* 1.514; Aul. Gell. 1.5. Despite Bright’s statement to the contrary (1978: 241-2), *amictus* can refer to the clothes of either sex, as can *uestes*; see McGann 1983: 1987 n. 42. For both men and women, a small foot and a snugly fitting shoe were considered attractive and stylish; see Hor. *Sat.* 1.2.93; 1.3.31; Ov. *Ars* 1.516, 622.

<sup>84</sup> On hairstyling as stereotypically feminine, see Mannsperger 1998: 9-12; Ziegler 2000: 212-15. For other references to women’s time-consuming self-beautification, see Ter. *Heaut.* 239-40; Cic. *Pro Mil.* 28. It was not unknown for men to wear make-up, but the habit was primarily associated with women, and suggested the effeminacy of the men who did so; see for example Petr. *Sat.* 23 and especially 126. For more on men’s *cultus*, see below, pg. 82-91.

<sup>85</sup> As Depew describes (1994: 415-23, especially 419), Aphrodite appears in the hymn as the symbol of what is quintessentially feminine. On the influence of Hellenistic poetry on Tibullus, see Bulloch 1973 (especially 80, on this passage in particular).

than would have been produced had the facts not been concealed.

This is not, however, the only purpose of the passage, or of its surprise twist. Emphasis is placed just as strongly on the futility of Marathus's attempts at self-beautification, made clear by the *quid prodest* that governs the whole list. But the only explanation given for why they should be so ineffective is the couplet that follows: *illa placet, quamuis inculto uenerit ore / nec nitidum tarda compserit arte caput* (1.8.15-16). Were the passage really addressed to a girl, the message would be clear: that unadorned beauty is superior, perhaps with the added implication that *illa* is so beautiful that any attempt to match her is misguided. When we realise that Marathus is in fact the addressee, though, things become less straightforward. The *nunc* and *iam* (1.8.9, 13) might tempt the modern reader to think that the real reason Marathus's attempts at attracting Pholoe with his *cultus* are in vain is that, now that he is trying to attract a woman, he can no longer rely on emphasising the femininity of his appearance, but needs a new strategy.<sup>86</sup> This interpretation of *nunc* and *iam* should not be discounted entirely, but it should not be over-emphasised either; in the literature of the period, women are often shown to be quite attracted to young men with an effeminate appearance.<sup>87</sup> Bulloch (1973: 88) suggests instead that Pholoe's *cultus* demonstrates the futility of Marathus's efforts by showing that his desire to attract is not reciprocated: if Pholoe were interested in attracting Marathus, she would be paying enthusiastic attention to her hairstyle too, but she is not. This, too, is valid. I would argue, though, that there is yet a third explanation for the futility of Marathus's efforts, which acknowledges both the contrast between Pholoe's *cultus* and Marathus's, and the force of *nunc* and *iam*. Given the smoothness with which the revelation of the addressee's gender is made, and the general tendency of the poem's structure to encourage multiple concurrent

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<sup>86</sup> This is the explanation offered, for example, by Putnam (1973: *ad loc.*), Cairns (1979: 138-9), and Murgatroyd (1980: *ad loc.*).

<sup>87</sup> See above, pg. 47 n.80. On men's excessive and/or effeminate *cultus* as dangerously appealing, see below, pg. 85.

interpretations, the explanation that was implied when we thought the addressee was female still applies even once we have learned otherwise, and works as a half-vindictive persuasion tactic. Marathus may not consciously consider Pholoe a rival beauty, but, with the suggestion that his adornments are futile because they cannot make him as pretty as she is – or at least, not anymore (hence *nunc* and *iam*) – Tibullus encourages him to think of her in that way, hinting to him that his days of being attractively feminine are almost at an end, and thus encouraging him to make good use of them while he can, by returning to Tibullus.

This effect ties in with the further connotations of the description of Marathus's *cultus*. Even if it really were describing the actions of a woman, it would be uncomplimentary, not only because of the implied superior beauty of *illa*, but because it suggests silly desperation on the part of the addressee. The fact that Marathus not only changes his hairstyle, but does so frequently (*saepe*, 1.8.10), the repetition of *frustra* and the doubling of the image of his changing his clothes (both *uestes* and *amictus*, 1.8.13), and the discomfort suggested by *ansaque compressos colligat arta pedes* (1.8.14) all suggest that this is not his normal regime, but an exaggeration of it, arising from his frustration. This desperate self-beautification in the face of rejection is recalled later in the poem by Tibullus's warnings to Pholoe of the fate of women resistant to love who change their minds too late:

*heu sero reuocatur amor seroque iuuentas  
cum uetus infecit cana senecta caput.  
tum studium formae est: coma tum mutatur, ut annos  
dissimulet uiridi cortice tincta nucis:  
tollere tum cura est albos a stirpe capillos  
et faciem dempta pelle referre nouam. (1.8.41-6)*

Multiple cues encourage both us and Marathus to relate this description to that of his current behaviour. The general focus on the hair and face here recall the similar preoccupations that opened the description of his *cultus*. The phrase *coma tum mutatur* in particular should send a chill down Marathus's spine (cf. *mutatas . . . comas*, 1.8.10): though in his case the word apparently referred to curling or styling, and here refers to dyeing, the idea that desperately

trying to change one's hair in a vain attempt to look attractive is a warning sign of being over the hill has clear resonances for his situation. Meanwhile, the repetition of *tum*, when we remember the *nunc* and *iam* of lines 10 and 13, stresses the fact that, though Pholoe will come to regret her aloofness only at some indefinite time in the future, Marathus is already in the danger zone. The advice in the next couplet (*at tu dum primi floret tibi temporis aetas / utere: non tardo labitur illa pede*, 1.8.47-8) could just as easily apply to Marathus as to Pholoe; *at tu* even momentarily hints at a change of addressee. This drives home the moral of the similarities between the pathetic future imagined for Pholoe and Marathus's own current behaviour: that his window of attractiveness to Tibullus is short-lived, and already near closing, so he should not waste his time with the unresponsive Pholoe.<sup>88</sup> Of course, Marathus's approaching adulthood is not the reason for Pholoe's aloofness, but Tibullus is appealing to fear, not to logic, and taking advantage of the fact that Marathus is evidently having difficulty adjusting his habits to fit an adult, masculine role.<sup>89</sup>

Like Propertius, then, Tibullus initially recalls the traditional moral superiority of simple *cultus* over excessive adornment, only to deliver unexpected and elaborately layered messages based instead on an (in this case, rather unconventional) elegiac framework. In doing so, though, he is not passively following suit, so much as responding in an active way to Propertius's treatment of the moral value of *cultus* in 1.2. Not only the shared subject matter – the discouragement of excessive adornment – but verbal echoes and similarities in structure encourage us to compare Tib. 1.8.9-16 to Prop. 1.2.1-8. Each is an eight-line passage, beginning with a question, and consisting of six lines on the futility of elaborate self-beautification, followed by two lines giving an explanation for this futility. The *quid prodest*

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<sup>88</sup> For more on 1.8.41-6, see below, pg. 140-2. It is worth noting the absence of any reference in 1.8-9 to Marathus's future beard and body hair, given the frequency of references to these signs of beloved boys' approaching adulthood in Greek homoerotic verse (see Tarán 1985). The description of Pholoe's bleak future, applied, by implication, to Marathus as well, takes the place of such references; the result is an elegant fusion of Latin elegiac tropes with those drawn from Greek epigram.

<sup>89</sup> On Marathus seeing himself in a 'female' (i.e., passively attractive) role, and his frustration with Pholoe's failure to assume a 'male' one, see Booth 1996: 233-9, especially 237.

that governs the first few lines of the Tibullan passage recalls *quid iuuat* at Prop. 1.2.1, which strengthens the parallel. Both passages start with the styling of hair (*ornato capillo*, Prop. 1.2.1; *coluisse capillos*, Tib.1.8.9), and both use the word *artifex* (Prop. 1.2.8; Tib. 1.8.12). The approach common to the two passages, of skewing traditional ideas about *cultus* by transplanting them into an elegiac context, has already been noted; but there is a further similarity in the poets' methods: each also presents one statement on the surface, but, at the same time, implies subtexts that reveal ulterior motives and secondary messages.

Similar though the two passages are, the differences between them are also significant. As we have seen, the effectiveness of Propertius's argument in 1.2 depends in part on the idea that Cynthia's adornments are, in themselves, quite attractive; this gives extra weight to his initial point, that the natural beauty that they mask is yet more powerful than they are. Tibullus focuses instead on the time-consuming and repetitive nature of Marathus's self-beautification; his methods are made to sound desperate and silly, rather than exotic and appealing. Whereas Propertius flatters Cynthia by contrasting her adornments with her own natural beauty (1.2.7-8), Tibullus contrasts Marathus's adornments with someone else's natural beauty (1.8.15-16) – a tactic that is problematic at best, and could be read as insulting. In terms of the general context, too, Tibullus has replaced an address to the dangerously elegant Cynthia, whose powerful position makes the careful rhetoric of 1.2 necessary, with one to the desperately self-preening Marathus, whose naïveté and helplessness are emphasised from the beginning by contrast to Tibullus's greater knowledge and control over the situation (*Non ego celari possum*, 1.8.1). In short, Tibullus takes those aspects of the Propertian passage which had been diplomatic and flattering, and makes them manipulative and mocking; and while the speaker in each poem is carefully persuading the addressee, Tibullus does so from a position of relative power and authority. The Tibullan passage is not a simple parody of the Propertian one; as we have seen, it works with the rest of the poem in

at least as complex a way as Prop. 1.2.1-8 had, and must, like that passage, be reconsidered and reinterpreted as more information is revealed. The end result is that Tibullus seems to be trying to one-up Propertius at his own game of communicating several messages at once. This effect is magnified by the fact that the surface and implicit messages that Propertius conveys – ‘you are too beautiful and talented to need adornments’ versus ‘please concentrate on what attracts me as a cultivated poet, and not on what attracts men in general’ – are not as far removed from each other as those conveyed by Tibullus – ‘I would like to encourage and advise you in your new relationship’ versus ‘that relationship is doomed, so come back to me while I’ll still have you’. Reminiscence of Prop. 1.2, furthermore, is not the only way in which the passage alludes to Propertius. Its first line, *quid tibi nunc molles prodest coluisse capillos* (Tib. 1.8.9), recalls Propertius’s taunt to Ponticus, the epic poet who once disparaged the lover-poet’s calling, but has now fallen in love himself, *quid tibi nunc misero prodest graue dicere carmen* (Prop. 1.9.9).<sup>90</sup> The parallel draws attention to the shared purpose of Tib. 1.8 and Prop. 1.9: giving friendly but rather superior advice to a friend who does not know how to woo a woman. The replacement of the composition of epic poetry with hair-curling, meanwhile (an already frivolous activity, whose distance from the world of epic is reinforced by the word *mollis*), calls up the metaphorical association we have seen elsewhere, between the arrangement of the hair and the composition of poetry. A comment on the nature and purposes of ‘heavy’ and ‘light’ genres has been transformed and transferred to a poem that playfully fuses the tropes of different ‘light’ genres (see above, n.77, 88). These echoes of Propertius allow Tibullus to have fun at his rival elegist’s expense in a general way, by putting a new and humorous spin on situations he had presented, but also specifically help to showcase the subtlety and complexity of Tibullus’s own methods, and invite comparison with those of his contemporary.

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<sup>90</sup> Note that both follow eight-line introductions, in which the speaker proclaims his status as an authority in love, more reliable on the subject than one could be by divination (Prop. 1.9.5-6; Tib. 1.8.3-4), and taught by his own misfortunes (Prop. 1.9.7-8; Tib. 1.8.5-6).

The next elegy, in the spirit of the repeated twists of 1.8, encourages us to re-evaluate our view of this poem, and of its engagement with Propertius. Whereas Tibullus had presented himself as being in a position of power and authority in 1.8, by the start of 1.9 his efforts have backfired, and he is in an entirely weak position. An older man has seduced Marathus away with money, and Tibullus is left at a loss as to how to feel or what to do: he asks the gods to spare Marathus (1.9.5-6), but relishes the idea of his being punished (13-16);<sup>91</sup> he is glad that Marathus also has a girlfriend, since it makes it possible for him to be deceived by a beloved in turn (39-40), but is ashamed of the servility of his own role in bringing them together (41-6); and so on.<sup>92</sup> Tibullus recovers some assertiveness starting from 1.9.53, though, as he turns to address his male rival. In frustration at his powerlessness to take any revenge himself, he fantasises about other ways in which his rival might be made ridiculous. He hopes that the man's wife may be so energetically unfaithful as to gain a reputation even worse than that of his drunken sister (53-64).<sup>93</sup> As his enthusiasm for this idea takes hold, Tibullus attempts to regain something of his powerful position as expert in love from the previous poem, arguing that, in fact, all the evidence shows that his rival's wife already has a lover, and her husband is simply too dull to notice. Tibullus's main piece of evidence is the wife's *cultus*: she arranges her hair carefully, and dresses in expensive finery. Based on either the traditional associations of adornment or elegiac ones, she is clearly trying to attract someone, and, Tibullus argues, it must be someone more desirable than her repellent husband:

*tune putas illam pro te disponere crines  
aut tenues denso pectere dente comas?  
istane persuadet facies, auroque lacertos*

<sup>91</sup> On this passage, see below, pg. 199-201.

<sup>92</sup> On 1.9 as a reversal of 1.8, in narrative situation, in tone, and in other respects, see Murgatroyd 1977: 118, 1980: 257-8; Maltby 2002: 323. On the overturning of Tibullus's position of power, see Lee-Stecum 1998: 246-56. It is not made clear whether Marathus's girlfriend is Pholoe, though it would be natural to assume so; on this and related issues, see below, n.99.

<sup>93</sup> The *soror* of lines 59-64 is possibly the wife's sister. But the insult is more stinging if she is the rich rival's own sister, so this is probably what is meant.

*uinciat et Tyrio prodeat apta sinu?  
 non tibi sed iuueni cuidam uult bella uideri,  
 deuoueat pro quo remque domumque tuam.  
 nec facit hoc uitio, sed corpora foeda podagra  
 et senis amplexus culta puella fugit. (1.9.67-74)*

Interestingly, though elsewhere in the passage addressed to his rival, Tibullus has no qualms about exaggerating the scenes he imagines, to make the abuse more biting – take for example the description of the sister’s escapades (1.9.59-64) – this does not extend to his description of the wife’s *cultus*. She puts her hair in order,<sup>94</sup> and combs it, but not in the pointlessly repetitive way that Marathus styles his (1.8.10), and she employs no deceptive or otherwise questionable measures, such as dyeing. Her Tyrian purple clothes and gold jewellery are luxurious, but they are not made to sound either ugly or ridiculous, and they avoid taking on too many negative connotations from the anti-money theme that dominates much of the poem (1.9.7-12, 17-20, 31-4, 51-2): unlike Marathus, who was seduced by gold and gifts, she does not seem to have obtained these luxury goods from her lover. Her self-adornment, then, is neither exaggerated nor morally questionable enough to make her the caricature that Tibullus earlier wished she would become.<sup>95</sup> He does of course suggest, both with his overall tone<sup>96</sup> and by plain accusation, that her purpose in beautifying herself is to attract a lover, but this purpose is immoral only by societal standards, not elegiac ones; she is, after all, acting as any elegiac mistress ought to, and favouring her lover – note that she has only one (*iuueni cuidam*, 1.9.71) – over her rich husband.<sup>97</sup> Her elegance is even explicitly given as a

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<sup>94</sup> Luck prints *componere corpus* for *disponere crines* (*componere* being Broukhusius’s conjecture, and *corpus* a MS variant), but I see no reason to reject *disponere crines*; doubled reference to the wife’s hairstyling, and an apparent confusion in the order of events (does she arrange her hair before combing it?) imply only that her self-beautification is a regular occurrence.

<sup>95</sup> Bright (1978: 256-7) and Cairns (1979: 152-3) argue that all three members of the family are made cartoonish in their depravity, to give Tibullus the obvious moral high ground. This is fair enough as applies to the rival and his sister, but the earlier, exaggerated picture of the wife’s behaviour (1.9.53-60) depicts only the ways in which Tibullus *wishes* she would behave, while the much tamer passage at hand is the ‘truth’, or at least an accusation that Tibullus considers plausible enough to make his rival nervous.

<sup>96</sup> As Lee (1990: *ad loc.*) and Maltby (2002: *ad loc.*) point out, both *prodeat* and *apta* are untypical word choices; their specific connotations emphasise the idea that she goes out in her finery with a purpose.

<sup>97</sup> Compare 1.6.1-38: it is not the fact that Delia sneaks off to cheat on her *uir* that leaves Tibullus sad and disillusioned – on the contrary, he taught her how – but only that she does so with men other than him.

justification for her behaviour (1.9.73-4), which rounds off the insult: Tibullus's rival is not only oblivious to his wife's infidelity, but is himself responsible for it, through his personal repugnance, which is ill-suited to her sophistication. The idea of elegiac values striking back at the man who has threatened them, if only through the wife's agency and not Tibullus's own, has a sense of retribution about it that must be satisfying to the speaker.

All this succeeds in its immediate purpose of putting Tibullus back into a position of power, as an authority in amatory matters. However, the exculpation of the rival's wife also prepares us for the shift back into powerlessness and despair that occurs next, as Tibullus is struck by an unfortunate corollary: Marathus *has* been willing to sleep with this man, and must therefore be utterly undiscerning by any standards, elegiac or otherwise (*huic tamen accubuit noster puer: hunc ego credam / cum trucibus Venerem iungere posse feris*, 1.9.75-6). I would argue that a factor contributing to this realisation and its accompanying lapse back into disillusionment and despair, beyond the plain logical progression from line 74 to 75, is the speaker's recognition of parallels between his accounts of the wife's *cultus* and Marathus's. The same kind of similarities and cues that encouraged comparison between 1.8.9-16 and Prop. 1.2.1-8 also operate here: in 1.9.67-74, we again have an eight-line passage dealing with *cultus* as a means of attracting a lover, beginning with questions, and listing hairstyling first, which ends with a comparison to someone else's level of attractiveness. These similarities, aided by the general continuity in narrative between 1.8 and 1.9,<sup>98</sup> encourage both us and the speaker to recall 1.8.9-16. The similarities between the two descriptions hint that Marathus's efforts in the previous poem should not have been dismissed as harmless, but should, like the wife's, have been recognised as a threat, especially since Marathus's self-beautification was more exaggerated than hers is.<sup>99</sup> The use of the

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<sup>98</sup> See above, n.76.

<sup>99</sup> The irony is increased if we follow Cairns's suggestion (1979: 151-2), argued out fully by Booth (1996), that the wife's lover is none other than Marathus, and the wife Pholoe. This is certainly possible; the phrase *iuueni cuidam* (1.9.71) may well suggest that he is not just any youth, but one that we know. The identification would

wife's obvious (and obviously successful) attempts to attract as evidence of her husband's stupidity has thus backfired on Tibullus, just as his persuasive efforts and display of special knowledge in 1.8 seem to have done. Tibullus's last shot at a sense of superiority in at least one aspect of the situation, as an expert in love who sees what others cannot, is thus negated. The reversal supports the general sense of self-pity and disappointment that Tibullus projects through much of the poem.<sup>100</sup> When we remember, however, that his position of authority in 1.8 was related to an apparent attempt in that poem to suggest his poetic superiority over Propertius, an extra layer is added to Tibullus's portrayal of himself in 1.9. The speaker may be portrayed as beaten down and regretting his misguided attempts to wield some authority and play the expert, but this reversal has been made possible by a subtle turn on the part of the poet, which works in much the same way as the one he employed when he and his persona shared a position of power and expertise.

Propertius's use of the imagery of adornment and the tropes of the anti-cosmetic tradition are of interest predominantly because of the networks of connections and contradictions between traditional and elegiac morals and between the virtues of art and nature that they build up. The depth and appeal of Tibullus's approaches to the same theme in 1.8 and 1.9 come instead from the complexity of their contexts, which are so intricately crafted and subtly expressed as to require constant re-evaluation on the part of the reader. When this is coupled with the fact that both of the passages in which Tibullus plays with the moral implications of *cultus*, a subject which he otherwise shows little concern for, contain direct, extended echoes of Propertius, it suggests that the possibilities in terms of allusion, intertextual play, and the development of his lover-poet persona that *cultus* provided as a

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also explain why recalling how he helped Marathus to meet with his girlfriend should prompt Tibullus to regret not just how servile, but how trusting he had been (1.9.39-46): if the rival is Pholoe's husband, Tibullus was escorting Marathus straight to his door. Then again, Tibullus may just as easily be implying that he himself is the wife's lover; he does after all claim to have somehow acquired knowledge of her technique in bed (1.9.65-6). Perhaps most likely, the lack of specificity about the lover's identity is intentional, and all part of the speaker's needling of his rival.

<sup>100</sup> On Tibullus's attempt to reach a new low in pitiable elegiac abjectness in 1.9, see Lyne 1980: 173-5.

subject were more important to Tibullus than the examinations of the double-sided attitude of the elegiac persona to the life of love that the subject had given (and would continue to give) Propertius a vehicle for.

### Part 3: Ovid and Feminine *cultus*

If Tibullus seems to have mined feminine *cultus* for its full poetic possibilities only in particular contexts, and to have otherwise exploited the motif largely in a conventional way, to evoke its traditional connotations, practically the opposite is true of Ovid, for whom *cultus* is a favourite motif. He deals with the subject frequently, throughout his works, and often at length, consistently presenting attitudes about it that deviate not only from traditional and contemporary moralising, but from Propertius's and Tibullus's respective takes on and uses of that moralising. This is observable even in brief references to the subject. Take, for example, his enumeration in *Am.* 2.4 of the reasons for his susceptibility to every kind of female beauty: he explains that the attractiveness of a woman who is *non culta* lies in the contemplation of how much better she could look, were she *culta*,<sup>101</sup> an adorned woman, on the other hand, is attractive because she is making the most of her charms (2.4.37-8). Instead of praise of nature over artificiality, on the model of Prop. 1.2, or a careful sidestep, as in Prop. 2.1 and 2.3, Ovid here presents us with explicit and offhand praise of *cultus*, and, further, the suggestion that adornment actually improves natural beauty.<sup>102</sup> *Amores* 2.4 is of course more analogous to Prop. 2.23 than to 1.2, 2.1, or 2.3: Ovid's speaker is here decidedly not the single-minded lover of one preoccupying mistress. One might, therefore, be tempted to argue that the role of his unconventional attitude to *cultus* is simply to add to the poem's overall playfulness. But the approval of *cultus* that Ovid presents here recurs throughout the

<sup>101</sup> cf. Ov. *Met.* 1.497-8 (on which see below, pg. 194-5).

<sup>102</sup> Contrast [Tib.] 3.8.9-10 (*seu soluit crines, fuis decet esse capillis; / seu compsit, comptis est ueneranda comis*); a similar trope here suggests a subtly but significantly different message: that Sulpicia's beauty is so great as to be beyond the influence of *cultus* one way or another.

*Amores*, particularly where hair is concerned. In 2.5, for example, Corinna's arranged locks act as a deterrent to Ovid's contemplated violent retaliation for her infidelity, rather than as a further source of irritation: he wants to tear her hair *despite* its stylishness (*sicut erant (et erant culti) laniare capillos / et fuit in teneras impetus ire genas*, 2.5.45-6).<sup>103</sup> Listing the attractions of his two loves in 2.10, he notes that they are equally beautiful, but also equally *culta*, and gives priority to neither factor (*utraque formosa est, operosae cultibus ambae*, 2.10.5). And beauty is again paired with rather than placed ahead of *cultus* in 3.7, as Ovid explains that his partner's appearance is not to blame for his inability to perform sexually (*At non formosa est, at non bene culta puella*, 3.7.1).

Perhaps the most striking aspect of these mentions of feminine *cultus* to the reader of Tibullus, and especially of Propertius, is their nonchalance. As we have seen, both earlier poets do at times describe elaborate or luxurious *cultus* without actively passing moral judgement on it, but never, as Ovid does in these cases, do they juxtapose it with natural beauty without acknowledging the traditional difference in value and connotations between the two. Given the contexts of infidelity, promiscuity, and general sexual licence in which these references occur, the implication is certainly not that the usual associations between attention to *cultus* and immoral conduct are invalid, or ought to be reversed, nor does Ovid seem to be oblivious to them. In short, he implicitly acknowledges the negative connotations of *cultus*, but is not particularly bothered by them. The elevation and justification of an idle (and, in traditional terms, immoral) life devoted to love are one of the defining features of the elegiac genre, but is in the case of Propertius and Tibullus generally accompanied by dissatisfaction with the aspects of this life that fail to live up to their ideal conception of it. Propertius bewails Cynthia's infidelity or her lack of love or even concern for him;<sup>104</sup>

<sup>103</sup> For more on this passage, see below, pg. 123-4.

<sup>104</sup> Prop. 1.15; 1.18; 2.4; 2.5; 2.6; 2.8; 2.9; 2.16; 2.24b; 2.25; 3.25. On the effects of the interaction between the two sides of Propertius's persona, the libertine and the conservative, see Gibson 2007: 44-53 (and 72-4, for Ovid's lack of such a dilemma).

Tibullus longs for Delia's lifelong devotion, or a fantasy-life with her in the countryside, and is tortured by the aloofness and greed of Marathus and Nemesis.<sup>105</sup> Both poets use the moral implications of *cultus* to develop and reflect on these sources of internal conflict and dissatisfaction. The speaker in the *Amores*, by contrast, is unconflicted about his abandonment of traditional morals and values, and does not long for any sort of idealised union of the peaceful and self-indulgent atmosphere of the demi-monde with the security of married life; instead, he simply prefers the former.<sup>106</sup> Ovid's matter-of-fact and appreciative attitude towards *cultus* is part of this overall difference in approach.

An analysis of *Am.* 1.14, a poem focusing entirely on hair and its *cultus*, will shed more light on the specifics of this departure, and its implications. Recent examinations of the poem have focused on its metapoetic aspects: Zetzel (1996) sees the loss of Corinna's hair, as a result of excessive styling, as a metaphor for the death of the genre's liveliness, as the result of the constant rehashing of tropes. Papaïoannou (2006), on the other hand, sees the speaker's desire to control his mistress's *cultus* as a metaphor for the poet's need for control over his composition. Though each argument becomes strained at times,<sup>107</sup> both have merit, and cues do encourage a metapoetic reading of Corinna's hair at various points. These do not, however, coalesce into a single over-arching metaphor that can explain the poem as a whole. They are thus best treated individually, and in the context of the poem's engagement with traditional and elegiac ideas about *cultus* and morality, which will be my focus here.

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<sup>105</sup> On Delia, see Tib. 1.1.57-64; 1.2.71-4; 1.5.21-34; 1.6.85-6; on Marathus, 1.4.81-4; 1.9; on Nemesis, 2.3.1-10; 2.4; 2.6.25ff.

<sup>106</sup> There are exceptions to this tendency towards moral indifference, such as the paired abortion poems, 2.13 and 2.14 (on which see below, pg. 201-3), but these still adhere to the general principle that Ovid represents a departure from Propertius's or Tibullus's idealism, to down-to-earth attitudes and subjects; see James 2003a: 173-83. In book three, more usual laments about his mistress's lying (3.3) and greed (3.8) creep in, but these are interspersed with poems in a playfully amoral vein (e.g., 3.4), and act more to ease the reader into the renunciation of the life of love presented in 3.11, than to signal a real change in general approach.

<sup>107</sup> Zetzel's interpretation of the cedar colour of Corinna's hair, for example (1996: 79-81) is somewhat extravagant. Papaïoannou, meanwhile, though she establishes very clearly that Corinna is portrayed as the agent of her hair's destruction (2006: 61-5), must rely on evidence from outside *Am.* 1.14 (the concept, which is itself open to interpretation, that Corinna's *ornatrices* in *Am.* 1.11-12 and 2.7-8 are analogues for the poet) to explain how the speaker can be seen as having had any active role in creating the more moderate *cultus* Corinna has rejected (2006: 51-5).

The poem is a faux-moralising lecture to Corinna on the subject of her excessive hairstyling, which in fact displeases the speaker not on moral grounds, or even because he is threatened by her desire to make herself more attractive, but for quite the opposite reason: she has, in her overzealousness, made herself *less* attractive. This last idea, at least, sounds reminiscent of Prop. 1.2,<sup>108</sup> and indeed, for the first twelve lines, *Am.* 1.14 seems as if it is going to develop into just such an anti-*cultus* argument. It begins, in both proper elegiac and traditional moralistic fashion, with a note of disapproval of artificial beauty aids (1.14.1-2). This is tinged with humour by the idea that their effect has been negative in the objective sense, and not just in the opinion of the speaker, as in Prop. 1.2 or 2.18.23-38: they have made Corinna's hair fall out. Still, the resulting difference is mainly one of tone, and does not yet constitute a deviation from the anti-cosmetic norm. Continuing in this quasi-traditional vein, then, Ovid goes on to praise the exceptional natural beauty of Corinna's untreated hair: it was as dense and beautiful as Chinese silks, it was as fine as a spider's web, it had the colour of cedar (1.14.3-12). At this point, though, comes a departure from the expected trajectory – anticipated, perhaps, by the casual equation of the beauties of art and nature seen in the preceding description:<sup>109</sup> the next virtue of Corinna's own hair that Ovid cites is its aptitude for styling. Her locks were not only *dociles*, but *centum flexibus apti* (1.14.13). This is a practical observation, and not a hypothetical one, as we hear in the next line that they have never yet caused their owner difficulties in their styling (1.14.14). Clearly, Corinna demanded much of her hair, putting it up in a variety of complicated styles; in other words, she acted in precisely the way that the traditional moralists complain of. To the speaker in 1.14, though, variability is a virtue: if hair that can stand up to frequent and extravagant styling is to be praised, then such styling must be not only acceptable, but desirable. The moral implications are ignored completely.

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<sup>108</sup> On *Am.* 1.14's echoes of Prop. 1.2, see Zetzel 1996: 74-7.

<sup>109</sup> On silk and spiders' webs as poetic metaphors, see Zetzel 1996: 77-9; Papaïoannou 2006: 45-6, 55.

Next, Ovid remarks that the docility of Corinna's hair had the welcome side-effect of keeping her from taking out her frustration at its misbehaviour on her *ornatrix*, by stabbing her arms with hairpins (1.14.15-18). Again, Ovid disapproves only of a specific aspect of women's adornment, rather than disapproving of *cultus* in itself. The scene of a woman doing violence to her slave-hairdresser, though it is quite possible that it reflects a contemporary reality, is one that is generally seen in satire, with the humour lying in the contrast between the woman's exaggerated refinement of dress and crude lack of refinement in conduct.<sup>110</sup> This suggests that Ovid's distaste for the idea lies partly in the lack of *cultus* (in the sense of sophistication of manners) that it constitutes. But the fact that Ovid here approves of the complicated adornment of Corinna's hair – he even enjoys witnessing the process, leaving no doubt about its artificiality, or the time and effort involved – and chooses instead to comment on the unpleasantness only of this secondary aspect, also draws attention to the unconventionality of his point of view. The next section has a similar effect; Ovid again presents us with a situation to which we might expect him to express one attitude, only to come out with something subtly different:

*saepe etiam nondum digestis mane capillis  
purpureo iacuit semisupina toro;  
tum quoque erat neglecta decens, ut Thracia Bacche,  
cum temere in uiridi gramine lassa iacet.* (1.14.19-22)

It is not, as we might have expected, the fact that Corinna's hair is most beautiful in its natural state that Ovid appreciates about this scene: the *quoque* suggests that it is equally beautiful in this state, not more so. Her purple couch, too, an expensive item,<sup>111</sup> keeps us from thinking that Ovid's approval has anything to do with any lack of ostentation or virtuous

<sup>110</sup> On the mime- or satire-like atmosphere of the scene, which reappears at *Ars* 3.239-42, see Gibson 2003: 192; for examples, see *Mart.* 2.66; *Juv.* 6.485-95. On these and other instances of hairpins being used as weapons, see Frapiccini 2011: 26. On *ornatrices* in Roman culture and literature, see Ziegler 2000: 191-6; Cesa 2011, especially 45-8. Two of Corinna's *ornatrices* elsewhere play a significant role (Nape, in *Am.* 1.11-12, and Cypassis, in *Am.* 2.7-8), and the closeness of the relationship between a woman and her hairdressers is emphasised at *Ars* 1.351-72. Cynthia feels quite sentimental about her *ornatrix*, at least posthumously (*Prop.* 4.7.75-6).

<sup>111</sup> The extravagance of imported purple dyes and fabrics is a familiar feature of elegiac complaints about luxury: see *Prop.* 3.14.28-9; *Tib.* 1.2.77-8; 1.9.69-70; 2.4.27-8.

simplicity that her loose and unadorned hair may suggest. And after all, this is not her usual state; she is simply not dressed yet. It is instead clearly the implied erotic context of the scene that makes it particularly attractive for the speaker; the virtuous connotations of lack of adornment are ignored again, and now also overwritten by the eroticism of loose hair.<sup>112</sup>

Having established that the reason for his disapproval is neither the fact that Corinna sets out to attract by styling her hair, nor any preference for her unadulterated beauty strong enough to lessen his appreciation for her adorned beauty, Ovid goes on to explain more fully what the source of his complaint is: Corinna's *cultus* has been excessive, to the point of violence. He gives an extended description of Corinna's torture of her own hair by means of hot curling irons (1.14.23-30),<sup>113</sup> in which personification of the locks (*heu, mala uexatae quanta tulere comae!* 1.14.24), combined with the connotations of *ferrum* and *ignis*, and the speaker's own pleas for Corinna to show mercy, suggest the torture of rebellious slaves.<sup>114</sup> In this case, we know from the earlier description of its delicacy and obedient nature that Corinna's hair deserves no such treatment, which increases the mock pathos. The final line of the description reinforces the pointless cruelty of Corinna's efforts: her hair's natural waves, far from needing instruction, could have taught her curling iron a thing or two (*erudit admotas ipse capillus acus*, 1.14.30). This and the lines that follow, comparing Corinna's hair to the attractively untamed curls of Apollo and Bacchus,<sup>115</sup> or the loose hair of Apelles's Venus Anadyomene,<sup>116</sup> do of course suggest an appreciation for unstyled hair, but the contrast, as in lines 19-22, is with hair that has been mistreated to the point of falling out, not with that which has been elegantly or even repeatedly styled. The reference to Apelles, too –

<sup>112</sup> For more on *Am.* 1.14.19-22, see below, pg. 189-90.

<sup>113</sup> On ancient hair-curling methods, including hot irons and curling-pins, see Mannsperger 1998: 16-25, and figs.2-8; Ziegler 2000: 199-201.

<sup>114</sup> Compare Propertius's willingness to undergo such torture at 1.1.27, Cynthia's planned torture of Lygdamus and Nomas, at Prop. 4.7.35-8, and Amor and Nemesis's figurative torture of Tibullus, at 2.4.3-6. On *ferrum* and *ignis*, see McKeown 1989: *ad loc.* McKeown also points out that *capiti, ferrea, parce tuo* (1.14.28) plays on a formulation, *parcere capiti*, which ordinarily means to spare someone's life; the literalisation of the phrase makes for an entertaining pun, while increasing the general bathos of the passage.

<sup>115</sup> On the proverbially beautiful hair of Apollo, see below, pg. 206-8.

<sup>116</sup> An image of which Ovid is fond: see *Ars* 3.223-4, 401-2; *Trist.* 2.526-7; *Ex Pont.* 4.1.29.

a nod toward Prop. 1.2.21-2 – again compares natural to artificially created beauty, without disparaging either.

Throughout, then, Ovid disapproves of what Corinna has done to her hair not because it speaks to some larger failing in her character or conduct – no mention is made of her actions being an attempt to attract other men, for example – but because it has ruined her hair's beauty, which was equally powerful whether enhanced by *cultus* or in its natural state. To the speaker, though, this does not lessen the harm done. Corinna's dual role as perpetrator and victim is emphasised, as Ovid rubs it in by explaining that she has no one to blame but herself, and comparing her harsh hair-dyes to witches' poisons (1.14.35-44). He does not even allow the temporary cure for her self-inflicted baldness to be a source of comfort, but instead dwells for eight lines on the shame that will result from wearing a wig made from the hair of barbarian prisoners (1.14.45-52). Note, though, that he does not suggest that artificial hair is ugly, or even that, to the observer, it is no replacement for the real thing.<sup>117</sup> On the contrary, he thinks that Corinna is likely to be praised for her false hair; the source of her shame will instead be her own knowledge that she has not deserved this praise (1.14.47-50). Though he does at last express disapproval of artificial beauty, then, his disapproval centres not on the aesthetic value of artificiality in itself, but on disappointment in the knowledge that it masks ugliness.<sup>118</sup> When the artificial is an aid to something that is already beautiful in its natural state, as in Corinna's ordinary hairstyling, Ovid has no objection, but is instead actively approving. At all times in the poem, aesthetic concerns are given priority, and moral ones largely ignored; when the latter do intrude, they remain directly connected to aesthetics, hairstyling, and *cultus* themselves, to the exclusion of any larger implications about a woman's virtues and vices that these might have. This aesthetic focus is seen even in Ovid's

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<sup>117</sup> Contrast Prop. 2.18.23-38 (above, pg. 29-31); Propertius draws a similar contrast between 'Roman' and 'barbarian' hair, but, unlike Ovid, emphasises the ugliness of substituting one for the other. As Gibson notes, Ovid is rather cool towards wigs in the *Ars* (2003: ad 3.165-6), but he does not actively discourage them. On wigs in Rome, see Mannsperger 1998: 27-8; Ziegler 2000: 173-8; Olson 2008: 74-5.

<sup>118</sup> Compare *Ars* 3.161-8 (on which see below, pg. 78-81).

reassurance to Corinna in the final couplets that one day her own hair will grow back (1.14.53-6); the phrase he uses to tell her to cheer up, *collige cum uultu mentem* (1.14.55), suggests that it is the damage done to her appearance by her sorrow as much as that sorrow itself that he minds.<sup>119</sup>

This prioritisation of the aesthetic and the practical over the moral or the sentimental where *cultus* is concerned finds its most sustained expression in 1.14, but, as seen in the other examples listed above, it is the norm throughout the *Amores*. On one level, Ovid's engagement with the traditional associations of *cultus* is similar to that of Propertius and Tibullus, in that all three acknowledge but skew these associations, rather than denying or reversing them outright. The difference is that Ovid is also playing with and subverting the elegiac ideas with which his predecessors replaced traditional ones. Propertius and Tibullus agree with and maintain the general outline of the traditional, negative associations of excessive *cultus*, but alter the details to suit elegiac situations and values, by redefining what constitutes *leuitas*, why precisely artificial means of beautification are self-defeating, or what the virtuous behaviour signified by simple *cultus* ought to be like.<sup>120</sup> Ovid, by ignoring the moral implications of *cultus* entirely, makes his persona come across as grounded in no particular moral framework, whether traditional or elegiac; his sense of what is 'bad' or 'wrong' is guided mostly by the principle that one (or he, at least) ought to strive for pleasure and the enjoyment of beauty. If activities like Corinna's overzealous hair-curling are wrong, it is only because they get in the way of this goal, by destroying something attractive. Ovid's acceptance of the fact that his mistress will naturally not follow an imposed elegiac moral framework any more than she follows a traditional one is an attitude striking in its lack of idealism. This unconcerned amorality defeats the expectations of the reader of Propertius and

<sup>119</sup> Compare the final lines of *Am.* 1.7 (below, pg. 122-3), and Catull. 3.17-18. On the aesthetic advantages of avoiding strong emotions, see *Ars* 3.501-8.

<sup>120</sup> Prop. 3.14 is closest in tone to Ovid's tongue-in-cheek approach to *cultus* and morality. It is important to note, though, that in the *Amores* the joke more often relies on the statement of a preference not for fantastic scenarios like the encouragement of public nudity and co-ed wrestling, but for essentially believable ones.

Tibullus, and Ovid's pose of unawareness of the surprising nature of his attitudes only increases the humour that results.

Ovid's didactic works<sup>121</sup> make an interesting comparison to the *Amores* in this regard. In the *Amores*, the effect of Ovid's approaches to *cultus* in general and hairstyling in particular relies largely on ignoring the moral issues connected to them, and thus making these issues conspicuous by their absence. In the didactic works, Ovid is more direct, devoting whole passages to explicitly laying out his *praeceptor amoris* persona's unconventional amoral attitudes. As before, the poet winks at us in an understanding of the traditional, elegiac, and/or contemporary political ideals that his persona is blithely subverting, but now relies more on direct irony than on implication. Nonetheless, the greater part of what is happening does remain subtextual, so that the effect is essentially that of a clearly suggested but unstated punchline. The more irreverent the punchline, the more daring this game seems, and the more humour it generates. As Dalzell explains (1996: 154-5), the ideal reader of the didactic works would be 'someone who is prepared to be shocked, or at least someone who will take delight in the thought that other readers will be shocked'; the balance, I would argue, leans heavily towards the latter.

The passage in the *Ars* (3.101-28) that introduces Ovid's advice to women on how best to beautify themselves – beginning with advice on how to style their hair (3.129-68) – presents bodily *cultus* as equivalent in value to other forms of *cultus* considered less frivolous: agriculture (3.101-2) and civic improvements (3.113-20). At the simplest level, this, like the equation of natural and artificial beauty in the *Amores*, papers over a traditional distinction; by emphasising the similarities in practice and terminology between self-beautification and these areas, Ovid de-emphasises their differing moral value and connotations. As many have pointed out, though, the passage also alludes to and parodies

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<sup>121</sup> I shall be analysing the *Ars Amatoria* most closely (with a focus on book three), but general statements about Ovid's didactic works should be taken to refer also to the *Remedia Amoris* and the *Medicamina Faciei Femineae*.

earlier poetic reflections on the contrasts between the simple past and the ostentatious present, and the Augustan programmes of civic renewal that, in part, prompted those reflections.<sup>122</sup> These poetic evocations of the past, whether they are appreciative of or disappointed with the present, tend to evoke (or at least acknowledge) nostalgia for the rural life. Ovid is instead dismissive of *simplicitas rudis* (3.113), and treats the superiority of the present as self-evident. His appreciation for the present, meanwhile, is based not on the values that it shares with the past, but on those features which differentiate it from the past most sharply: sophistication and cultivation. This is an amusing inversion of the trope of comparing Rome's mythic origins to contemporary reality in order to draw moral comparisons,<sup>123</sup> but it also pokes fun at official policy. Ovid, under the pretence of praising Augustan building programmes such as the construction of the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine (3.119) and the building and refurbishment of temples on the Capitoline (3.115-16), undermines their goal of appearing to revivify the *pietas* of past ages,<sup>124</sup> by focusing solely on the new public buildings' aesthetic advantages. Note especially Ovid's comment that the new temples on the Capitoline are such an improvement that they look as if they were built for a different Jupiter (*aspice quae nunc sunt Capitolia, quaeque fuerunt: / alterius dices illa fuisse Iouis*, 3.116). This is hardly a compliment for buildings meant to recall past piety; read in a certain sense, it even hints that the temples have been built to glorify Augustus himself rather than the gods. Adding to the irreverence of the passage, Ovid has only brought up these buildings in the first place as an *exemplum* for women hoping to attract lovers by artificially beautifying themselves; he thus draws a parallel between the two that cannot be flattering to the former.<sup>125</sup> Even when Ovid goes on to explain that it is not the luxury of the modern age

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<sup>122</sup> See Galinsky 1981; Watson 1982; Myerowitz 1985: 57-61; Mader 1988; Dalzell 1996: 155-6; Gibson 2003: *ad* 113ff. Compare Tib. 2.5.23-38, 55-62; Verg. *Aen.* 8.97ff., 347ff.; Prop. 4.1.1-70.

<sup>123</sup> On this trope, see Edwards 1996: 27-43.

<sup>124</sup> On Augustus's building programmes, see Zanker 1988: 101-14.

<sup>125</sup> See Gibson 2003: *ad* 123ff. Mention of the new or refurbished civic buildings in this context also recalls Ovid's advice to men that they are good places to find women (*Ars* 1.67-88); see Laigneau 1999: 178-80.

that he admires, but its *cultus* alone, he continues to emphasise the gulf between past and present:

*prisca iuuent alios, ego me nunc denique natum  
gratulor: haec aetas moribus apta meis,  
non quia nunc terrae lentum subducitur aurum  
...  
sed quia cultus adest nec nostros mansit in annos  
rusticitas priscis illa superstes auis.* (3.121-8)

Given the type of *cultus* that the passage is fundamentally concerned with, there is also the implication that Ovid's preference for the cultured present over the rustic past is due most of all to the elegance of modern ladies.<sup>126</sup> In the context of Augustan attempts to hark back to the virtues of the past (*mos maiorum*), in part through moral reforms – and at a time by which these reforms would already be showing signs of ineffectiveness – these are highly daring sentiments.<sup>127</sup> The idea that the present is *moribus apta meis* is particularly so, suggesting as it does that the Rome that Augustus has created is not so much suited to the *mos maiorum* as to the *mores* of the *praeceptor amoris* and his ilk<sup>128</sup> – that the kind of *cultus* that it represents is reflected not only in the grand appearance of the public buildings, but in the women's habits in dress, and thus, according to traditional associations, in their conduct.

This is the context of the advice on women's hairstyling that follows. It is somewhat surprising, then, that the thrust of this advice, summarised in its immediate introduction (3.129-36), is that each should eschew unnecessary and gaudy luxuries, and make the most of her appearance by choosing a hairstyle that flatters her face. A list of possibilities, elaborated by little more than some brief mythical *exempla*, follows (3.137-58).<sup>129</sup> If the section of book three treating hair, clothing, and deportment is to be read in part as poking fun at the tropes of

<sup>126</sup> See Watson 1982: 241-4.

<sup>127</sup> On Augustan moral reforms and the difficulties in interpretation and enforcement that they encountered, see Dio Cass. 54.16.1-5; Just. *Dig.* 48.5; Raditsa 1980: 281-3, 310-19; Richlin 1981: 384-8; Zanker 1988: 135-66, especially 156ff.; Treggiari 1991: 292-8; McGinn 1998: 70-247, especially 140-215; Edwards 1993: 34-62.

<sup>128</sup> See Edwards 1993: 18-19.

<sup>129</sup> The section on clothes (3.169-92) runs along similar lines, discouraging expensive fabrics (such as Cynthia's Coan silk) and dyes (such as Nemesis's Tyrian purple) in favour of cheaper options, chosen to flatter the individual wearer's complexion.

Augustan social and moral reforms, as both the tone and content of 3.101-28 strongly suggested it would, in what way does this advice further that goal? It seems surprisingly straightforward and unobjectionable, following on such an irreverent introduction. Compare Ovid's own statement, in the *Medicamina*, that women's desire to deck themselves with jewels and continually alter the style of their perfumed hair in order to please men is not at all shameful, given the attention that men give to their own *cultus* (19-26). Following on an introduction that has much in common with *Ars* 3.101-28, this passage relies on a simple tongue-in-cheek defence of behaviour that smacks of immorality as perfectly innocent, by comparing it to even more questionable behaviour.<sup>130</sup> This is more the sort of sentiment that the reader might have expected to find at *Ars* 3.129ff. It is, then, fair to assume that there is something more subtle going on in the latter passage than the inoffensive surface reading would suggest.

Gibson<sup>131</sup> (I think, rightly) explains Ovid's deceptively bland advice on hair and clothes in *Ars* 3 by pointing out that, in advising consciously attractive but moderate elegance rather than the over-the-top luxury associated with courtesans, Ovid is championing the 'middle way' between such luxury and the virtuous simplicity of the wife's traditional *stola* and *uittae*, and thus blurring the boundary between *matrona* and mistress. This is precisely the boundary that the *lex Iulia de adulteriis coercendis* sought to keep distinct. For the purposes of the law, women come in two categories: those with whom extramarital sex is either *adulterium* or *stuprum*,<sup>132</sup> and therefore punishable under the law – that is, citizens' wives, unmarried daughters, divorcees, and widows – and those with whom it is legally permitted – that is, slaves, prostitutes both habitual and casual, and freedwomen and

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<sup>130</sup> On men's *cultus*, see below, pg. 82-91. For instructive comparisons of *Med. Fac.* 1-36 and *Ars* 3.101-28, see Nikolaidis 1994; Watson 2001.

<sup>131</sup> See Gibson 2003: 25-35; 2006: 124-42; 2007: 88-9, 112-14.

<sup>132</sup> On the technical distinction between these offences, see Gardner 1986: 121-5, 127-31.

*peregrinae* not married to or living in respectable concubinage with citizens.<sup>133</sup> Either this law itself or accompanying policies also sought to make the two categories more visually distinct, by encouraging the wearing of the *stola* and *uittae* by *matronae*, and the wearing of the toga by *meretrices* and convicted adulteresses, but neither measure seems to have been very effective.<sup>134</sup> In reality, there was a vast middle ground between *stola*-clad matron and toga-clad *meretrix*, consisting of exempt women who were not *meretrices*, and thus would not have been made to wear the toga,<sup>135</sup> women occupying a potentially ambiguous place on the continuum, such as freedwomen and *peregrinae* whose marital status was unknown or unclear, and non-exempt women whose dress alone gave no clear indication of their status. Even at the period when it was being actively encouraged, not many matrons seem to have worn the *stola* and *uittae* much, outside of formal and ceremonial occasions.<sup>136</sup> Ovid's advice, then, reflects the reality rather than the legal ideal. Most of the styles in hair and dress that he suggests are decorative enough to indicate that their wearers wish to look attractive, but moderate enough to make their status ambiguous. The result is that it is difficult to tell which category Ovid's students are meant to belong to: the available, or the (legally) unavailable. There is not far to go from here to the inference that his advice is applicable to both categories: not only to courtesans and other exempt women, but to less than virtuous wives wishing to act like them.

The connotations of the individual hairstyles listed, though, add more specific bite to

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<sup>133</sup> On these exemptions and the rationales behind them, see Raditsa 1980: 314-15; Richlin 1981: 382; Treggiari 1991: 278-81; McGinn 1991: 342-72, 1998: 194-202; Gibson 2003: 27-30.

<sup>134</sup> For these policies and their degree of effectiveness, see Zanker 1988: 165-6; McGinn 1998: 160-2, 208-11; Olson 2008: 28-39.

<sup>135</sup> See Veyne 1988: 67-84. For the distinction between *meretrices* and mistresses of the type seen in elegy, see Edwards 1997: 81; Laigneau 1999: 182-9; and especially Flemming 1999: 47-9, 56-7. For the reflection of this distinction in the terminology used (specifically *meretrix/scortum* versus *amica*), see Adams 1983: 348-53. Hence the force of the insult when Cynthia's ghost characterises her replacement as a *meretrix* at Prop. 4.7.39, or when Ovid compares Corinna's behaviour to that of a *meretrix* at *Am.* 1.10.21-4 and 3.14.7-10.

<sup>136</sup> See Olson 2008: 31-3, 36-41. Having the right to wear it was a more important distinction than actually wearing it; see Hemelrijk 1999: 13-15. Compare the wearing of the toga by men: Suet. *Aug.* 40.5; Juv. *Sat.* 3.171-2; see also Zanker 1988: 162-5; Stone 1994: 17, 21-2; Davies 2005: 127. On the overlap in the dress of sexually available and unavailable women, see McGinn 1998: 160-1; Olson 2008: 47-51.

this irreverent implication. The first style described is the plain middle parting (presumably with a bun at the back), which Ovid recommends for long faces (3.137-8). On the face of it, this is the most innocuous suggestion possible; variations on this simplest of styles were common at all periods, and among all types of women.<sup>137</sup> All the image does in itself, then, is reinforce Ovid's argument for simplicity. It is the second style listed that will have encouraged the contemporary reader to re-evaluate his or her impressions of the list, and of Ovid's intentions. The *nodus*, which Ovid recommends for women with round faces (3.139-40), is a uniquely Roman hairstyle, characteristic of portraits of Octavia, Livia, and Julia; it is unattested before the 40s BCE, but became very common in the first half of Augustus's principate, from the 30s through the 20s BCE.<sup>138</sup> It is distinctly prim in appearance, and seems to have been adopted by the women of Augustus's household to suggest their virtuous simplicity, in self-conscious contrast to the complex and often bejewelled styles that had been dominant in the late Republic, which were too suggestive of the Hellenistic East to be appropriate for a post-Actium political atmosphere.<sup>139</sup> The popularity of the *nodus* in this period is thus probably attributable to its implications of wifely *pudicitia*, more than to its aesthetic merits.<sup>140</sup> By the time the *Ars* was written, it was past the peak of its popularity, and is seen primarily in portraits of middle-aged matrons.<sup>141</sup> It is thus not at all an obvious choice

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<sup>137</sup> On the middle parting as a basic feminine hairstyle, popular throughout Roman history, see Bartman 2001: 2.

<sup>138</sup> See Furnée-van Zwet 1956: 11-14; Kleiner 1977: 131-6. The hairstyle that modern scholars call the *nodus* (in reference to this passage) is formed by making a part on either side of the mid-line of the head, to isolate a strip of hair from forehead to crown, puffing the front of this section forward into a bulge, and French-braiding the rest of it down the midline of the head. The tail of this braid is whipped around a low bun formed from the rest of the hair. For illustrations, see Winkes 1995: cat. 41, 47, 50, 59, 98, 221, 226; Wood 1999: plates 11-13, 24-5; Micheli 2011: figs. IV. 5-6. Trillmich (1976: 56-7, n.189) and Köckel (1993: 37-8, 42-3) argue that Ovid is not describing the style now called the *nodus* at all, but rather a braided bun, worn on the crown of the head (Trillmich 1976: plates 16-17; Köckel 1993: plates 7c, 29c-e). I am inclined to follow the more common view (for a defence of which, see Mannsperger 1998: 31, n.171), but even if one were to follow Trillmich and Köckel, Ovid would still be describing a fairly restrained style, and one associated with young citizen women as much as (or more than) with courtesans.

<sup>139</sup> According to Dio (54.16.4-5), Augustus claimed to enforce Livia's plain and simple *cultus* personally. On Octavia, Livia, and the *nodus*, see Furnée-van Zwet 1956: 4-6; Trillmich 1976: 57-8, 63-4; Mannsperger 1998: 29-37; Bartman 1999: 36-9; Wood 1999: 54, 97-8; Hohenwallner 2001: 66-70; Micheli 2011: 53-6, 60-1.

<sup>140</sup> Winkes (2000: 32), for example, calls it 'the hairdo *par excellence* for a *matrona*'. Note that, in the population at large, the more complex, Hellenistic-inspired styles did also persist; see Trillmich 1976: 58.

<sup>141</sup> See Furnée-van Zwet 1956: 7; Kleiner 1977: 137-9.

for Ovid to include in his list of styles likely to attract lovers. Its strong association with the women in Augustus's family, meanwhile, gives significance even to the inclusion of the plain middle parting in the previous couplet: this is the style that Livia and the other women of the Imperial family are most often depicted wearing in portraits and monuments contemporary with the writing of the *Ars*.<sup>142</sup> As Ovid himself explains (3.151-2), there was at the time a wide variety of styles to choose from for fashionable young ladies. Heading his list with two simple, unassuming styles, both associated with the women of Augustus's household, as depicted in propagandic sculpture in their role as moral exemplars for the populace, would thus probably have struck the contemporary reader as not only incongruous, but irreverent, implying that even the most restrained and symbolically chaste of hairstyles are no proof of virtuous conduct. As with his equation of Augustan building programmes to the self-beautification of women hoping to attract lovers, Ovid has appropriated symbols of the moral policies of the regime for visual comparison alone, in a context that not only ignores, but actively works against their moral connotations in their official uses.

The resulting irreverent effect is reinforced by a variation on the same technique in the next pair of styles listed. The first, letting the hair flow over both shoulders like Apollo's (3.141-2),<sup>143</sup> makes for a rather looser style, and one that is less matronly than either the plain middle parting or the *nodus*, suggesting that Ovid is at last getting to some hairstyling advice that is more suited to his supposed intended readership of legally available women. But the image is paired with that of Diana (3.143-4), her hair tied back for hunting; especially following immediately on the *nodus* (and recalling the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine, mentioned at 3.119), this encourages us to think of the symbolic associations of the pair. Apollo and Diana were important symbols in Augustus's self-presentation, invoked (for

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<sup>142</sup> It was perhaps chosen for this use because of its combination of traditional simplicity with the visual evocation of sculptures of Greek goddesses; see Furnée-van Zwet 1956: 6-7; Trillmich 1976: 64-5; Mannsperger 1998: 37-44.

<sup>143</sup> On the symbolic value of Apollo's hair, see below, pg. 207.

example) at the *Ludi Saeculares*, which were celebrated in the year following the moral reforms, and incorporated the same themes of family values and increase.<sup>144</sup> Again, then, Ovid has hijacked propagandic images of the morals of the new regime, and bent them to his own purpose. All of this happens very quickly, and almost entirely on the level of implication, but, to the reader sensitised to the imagery associated with contemporary political propaganda, it would, I think, have been sufficiently pointed to make itself felt.

Over the next four lines, Ovid eases off on these subversive tactics, and simply lists hairstyles in rapid succession, but continues to mix restrained styles with ones that are looser in appearance and thus also in connotations,<sup>145</sup> and at no point recommends the practices traditionally most associated with the immoral conduct he is encouraging: frequent re-styling, the excessive artificial curling or perfuming of the hair, or expensive ornaments. The final style listed, artificial untidiness (3.153-8), is the only one that he elaborates on. As will be examined in more depth in the chapter on Dishevelment, the implications of loose and disordered hair vary widely according to context and perspective; the image suggests virtue, and the innocent victim, but is also an alluring one. This ambiguity is emphasised by the *exempla* Ovid cites, of Hercules falling in love with Iole at the sack of her city (3.155-6) and Bacchus rescuing Ariadne from Naxos (157-8). The most important thing to note, though, is that Ovid is encouraging his pupils to intentionally, artificially imitate these damsels in distress: in other words, to capitalise on a (misleading) impression of virtuous disregard for their appearance, for its attractive power. This drives home the point of the passage so far, with its recasting of state-supported images of moral rectitude as good looks to imitate if you want to attract a lover. If even artless simplicity can be faked, and the visual appeal of a

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<sup>144</sup> On Augustus and Apollo and Diana, see Kellum 1982; Zanker 1988: 49-53; Miller 2009. For Apollo and Diana linked with Augustus's victories and with the *Ludi Saeculares*, see for example Hor. *Carm.* 1.21; *Carm. Saec.* 1-8, 61-76.

<sup>145</sup> He lists: wearing one's hair loose and bouncy (3.145), tightly bound to the head (146; probably something like the braided styles described at Trillmich 1976: 40-6; Köckel 1993: 36-7), *testudine Cyllenaea* (147; an obscure phrase, perhaps referring to a style crowned by a tortoiseshell comb; see Gibson 2003: *ad loc.*), or in gentle waves (148).

hairstyle is at all times more important than whatever other message it sends, how can the motives of the wearer of any hairstyle – even the self-consciously virtuous *nodus* – be gauged?<sup>146</sup>

Ovid could have advised his students to dress in silk, to wear expensive jewellery, and to perfume their hair and dress it elaborately, as Cynthia or Corinna do, but instead specifically tells them not to (3.129-32, 169-72), and encourages the kind of moderate styles most liable to make them confusable with married women. If anything, he leans toward the *matrona* side of the continuum of styles. Note also that, throughout, Ovid's addressees are encouraged to mimic the appearance not of famous temptresses, but of Laodamia, the ultimate faithful wife (3.138), of the virgin Diana (143), of innocent victims like Iole and Ariadne (155-8), and even, by implication, of Augustus's own family members (138-41). By appropriating images of feminine virtue, and especially of the current regime's reawakening of the *mos maiorum*, and suggesting that they are no more likely to suggest virtuous intent or conduct than any other hairstyle, Ovid suggests the hypocrisy of such propaganda, and the unrealistic nature of the moral reforms it accompanies. The inclusion of distinctly matronly hairstyles like the *nodus* in the list, meanwhile, also tantalisingly suggests that the *Ars* as a whole might just as well be addressed to adulteresses as to women exempt from the *lex Iulia* – just clearly enough to tease the reader, but not quite clearly enough to contradict his frequent reassurances that his guidebook is not for married women (*Ars* 1.31-4; 2.599-600; 3.57-8, 611-14).

Of course, the advice that Ovid gives in the *Ars* on *cultus* in general and hairstyling in particular (3.101-58) engages not only with the anti-cosmetic tradition and with contemporary political issues, but with earlier elegy, particularly those poems relating to

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<sup>146</sup> Ovid turns this message around in a prominent revival of the *cultus* and morality theme in the *Fasti*; Claudia Quinta's reputation has been ruined by her variable hairstyle, but her virtue is proven by divine authority (*Fast.* 4.305-29). Given the possibility that Ovid himself added the detail that her hairstyle was the reason for Claudia's bad reputation (Livy gives no explanation; see 29.14.12), one might suggest that a subtle (and ambiguous) apologia for the attitudes expressed in *Ars* 3 is intended.

*cultus* discussed above. In much the same way as the moderate styles that Ovid suggests appear quite inoffensive until one considers their full implications in their Augustan context, his advice is also, on one level, in line with Propertius's and Tibullus's ideas about *cultus*, but, on another, differs from these significantly. Later passages, describing the use of dyes and wigs (3.159-68), and advising women on whether to let their lovers see them getting dressed (3.209-50), diverge yet further from elegiac precedent. The role of the speaker is naturally an important factor. In the *Ars*, Ovid's persona is not that of the lover, but of the *praeceptor*, who is not involved with any of his addressees in particular; his resulting disinterestedness has implications for his attitudes to *cultus* and its relation to issues of morality. For example, he draws no distinction between the value of attracting one lover, and attracting many; in fact, he encourages his pupils not to be too discriminating.<sup>147</sup>

Furthermore, the relationships that he is encouraging his pupils to form are not the deep, emotional bonds envisaged as the ideal by Propertius or Tibullus, but relatively light-hearted flings, in which the conventions of love poetry are acted out, but not internalised.<sup>148</sup> We might, therefore, have expected the *praeceptor* to encourage luxury, reversing standard elegiac advice to fit this change of priorities. But, just as Ovid characterises his *praeceptor* persona not as an entirely different character from the speaker of the *Amores*, but as the older and wiser version of the same person (3.340-8), he presents the relationships that his pupils are to form not as an alternative to those pictured in earlier elegy, but as the de-romanticised version of those very relationships. Similarly, he presents his advice on *cultus* not as an entirely different approach from that of his predecessors, but as a more down-to-earth and realistic take on the same one: the same advice, with a different rationale. Meanwhile, the speaker's greater personal distance from his subject matter creates the impression that his amoral pronouncements are comparatively rational and objective. From this position, even

<sup>147</sup> *Ars* 3.57-98 (especially 89ff.), 421-32.

<sup>148</sup> See for example his advice on feigning love, at *Ars* 1.611-18, 3.673-82. See also Myerowitz 1985: 23, 26-30.

more directly than in the *Amores*, he can draw attention to and have fun at the expense of the topoi of elegy, anti-*cultus* sentiment among them.<sup>149</sup>

Ovid's recommendation to his pupils that they should adorn themselves simply and inexpensively, then, is consistent with Propertius's statements in 1.2 and 1.15 (recalled at Tib. 1.8.9-16) about the pointlessness of excessive and luxurious *cultus*. The difference lies in his reasons for this recommendation (stated and implied), which are entirely practical in nature. The stated reason appeals to his pupils' desire to attract: the expensive adornments with which they attempt to captivate men are more likely to repel them, and should therefore be avoided (3.132-3). He makes no explanation based on aesthetics to back up the assertion that men are put off by luxurious adornments, but his stated preference for elegant public works over expensive private constructions (3.122-6) implies that the reason is their luxury: they demonstrate a greed that will manifest itself in requests for gifts, and repel lovers who do not want to go to that kind of expense.<sup>150</sup> A similar undercurrent is present in Prop. 1.2, as we have seen, but the speaker's surface rationales in that case are moral and idealistic. The *praeceptor's* purely practical approach removes the idealised elements of 1.2 – the picture of the elegiac mistress as a perfect beauty for whom any artificial assistance would only be a hindrance, and the idea that she is liable to be persuaded by the prospect of attracting only cultivated poets – and hints at their unlikely nature. There is the lurking suggestion, too, that the crowd of ordinary women that Ovid is addressing<sup>151</sup> are not to be distinguished from the perfect beauties addressed in elegy, but that they are in fact the same women, the difference lying in the fact that Ovid's advice is based more on the reality of what they are like than on the fantasy. Of course, this joking revelation of the 'truth' behind the elegiac ideal is itself

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<sup>149</sup> On the *Ars* as an inversion of elegy and elegiac ideals generally, see Myerowitz 1985: 33-4, 38-9; Dalzell 1996: 144-6; Volk 2002: 166-8.

<sup>150</sup> On the self-serving subtext of the passage, see Watson 1982: 237-9. On the *praeceptor's* tendency to favour the male lover's cause, even in book three, see Gibson 2003: 20.

<sup>151</sup> On the ordinariness (and sometimes repellence) of the addressees of book three, see Downing 1990: 241-5; Gibson 2003: 35-6.

artificial; as is made clear by the intricacies of the poems examined in parts one and two of this chapter, Propertius and Tibullus communicate their own awareness of the ill fit of their ideals with reality, and themselves draw attention to the multiple layers of meaning in what they say, including those that are self-serving, or that acknowledge and even manipulate the failure of their beloveds to live up to their conception of them. This only adds to the effectiveness of the joke, however, as Ovid characterises himself as a straight-talking and knowledgeable advisor by revealing ‘hidden truths’ that were never really hidden in the first place.<sup>152</sup>

The same principle that a sense of realism and practicality in the *praeceptor*’s advice makes us reconsider the validity of the ideals expressed by Propertius and Tibullus – albeit not in a serious enough way to genuinely undermine them, but only to create humour at their expense – applies also to the specific elements of his advice on hair. The way in which Ovid deals with the relationship between natural and artificial beauty, both in the passage we have looked at so far (3.101-58) and in others that follow (3.159-68, 209-50), represents a particularly significant contrast. Firstly, in Propertius and Tibullus, it is only excessive and artificial *cultus* that is considered a sign of *leuitas* and infidelity. In dissolving the link between a simple or natural appearance and virtue, Ovid suggests that self-beautification of any kind – moderate adornment, simple neatness, or even artificial dishevelment – is consistent with the conscious desire to attract. In the context of Augustus’s moral reforms, as we have seen, this casts doubt on the idea that sexually available and unavailable women can be made visually distinct; in the context of earlier elegy, it casts similar doubt on the idea that one’s mistress’s *cultus* can be used as an accurate gauge of her love and fidelity, and thus deflates the rhetoric behind the *exempla* cited at Prop. 1.2.15-24, 1.15.9-20, and 3.14.15-20, or the comparison drawn between Marathus’s behaviour and Pholoe’s at Tib. 1.8.15-16.

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<sup>152</sup> On the *praeceptor*’s tendency to claim special insight while relating obvious truths, see Dalzell 1996: 140.

Equally at odds with elegiac precedent is the *praeceptor's* approval for artificiality, which is already evident in the introduction to his discussion of *cultus*. Where Propertius invokes flowery meadows, woods, and pebbled shores as *exempla* of beauty (1.2.9-13), Ovid invokes tilled fields, vineyards, and man-made structures (3.101-2, 113-28), and avoids any mention of unspoiled nature. The advice that follows bears out this suggestion of the primacy of beauty achieved through *ars*. In the general instruction that introduces the list of hairstyles, having already pointed out that natural beauty is a rare gift, and one that will fade without assistance (3.103-6), Ovid explains that order created by conscious effort is the only reliable source of beauty, where hair is concerned: *non sint sine lege capilli; / admotae formam dantque negantque manus* (3.133-4).<sup>153</sup> The idea that the work of one's hands can deny beauty as well as granting it emphasises the importance of judgement and expertise – in short, precisely the kind of time-consuming attention to one's appearance that is associated with *leuitas* in Prop. 1.15, and ridiculed in Tib. 1.8. None but the last of the hairstyles Ovid lists is strikingly artificial or deceptive; the fact that the list as a whole (3.137-58) has been introduced by this general precept, though, keeps the focus on the effort and forethought involved in creating them. Furthermore, each style is designed to balance the slight defects in one's natural appearance (the middle parting to flatter a long face, the *nodus* a round one, and so on), so that even the simplest of them is depicted as a way of improving on nature.<sup>154</sup>

The recommendation, in Ovid's description of the artificially dishevelled look, that art should imitate chance (*ars casum simulet*, 3.155)<sup>155</sup> leads into a short passage describing artificial beautifications that mimic nature in an even more questionable way: dye and wigs (3.161-8). Ovid does not actively recommend the use of either. He does, however, downplay

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<sup>153</sup> This offhand dismissal of genuine dishevelment is striking, as Ovid elsewhere presents it as especially alluring; see below, pg. 189-92, 194-8.

<sup>154</sup> See Downing 1990: 239-40.

<sup>155</sup> Thus manuscript Y, followed by Kenney. Goold and Ramírez de Verger both print Tränkle's *ars casum simulat*, but this is rather too bland, and, unlike the jussive, does not contribute anything new; the same goes for Riese's *ars casu similis*, a suggested emendation of R's *ars casus similis*.

the negative connotations of their artificiality. In the introduction to the passage, he praises not art, but nature as the source of women's ability to hide their flaws (*o quantum indulget uestro natura decori, / quarum sunt multis damna pianda modis!* 3.159-60), presenting the fact that they do not go bald with age, as men do (3.161-2), as the reason that they can use dyes to disguise their age. This creates a strange situation, in which nature itself is imagined as facilitating the artificial imitation of nature. There is a nod to the traditional view that women have cause to be ashamed of using such artificial means, in Ovid's apparent surprise at the fact that they do not blush to be seen buying wigs in full view of the public (3.167-8).<sup>156</sup> In itself, though, this passage implies that the only way to tell that a woman wears false hair is to see her buy it, and thus that it is not so much wearing a wig that is shameful, as being known to wear one. As in *Am.* 1.14, there is no suggestion that a good wig is uglier than or even easily distinguishable from real hair. On the contrary, artificial beauty comes across as an improvement on the deficiencies that it hides: the colour of dyed hair is *melior uero* (3.164), and the only aspect of the appearance of false hair to be mentioned is how luxuriant it appears, in contrast to the thinning hair that it covers (3.165). The successful imitation of the best that nature might have offered represents just as acceptable an improvement on what nature has actually provided as does any other less artificial means of self-beautification.<sup>157</sup> This is very much at odds with the conception of natural beauty as self-evidently superior and adornments as futile and damaging that is put forward by Propertius in 1.2 and 2.18.23-38, and employed by Tibullus at 1.8.9-16. The explanation for the difference, as usual, lies in the fact that Ovid, rather than flattering his addressees by suggesting that they are beyond improvement, accepts as valid their desire for means of

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<sup>156</sup> The idea that the women replace their own hair with that which they make 'their own' by buying it (3.166) has a satirical edge, and is later adopted by Martial (6.12). Both dye and wigs are common objects of ridicule; see *Mart.* 3.43; 4.36; 6.12; 6.57; 8.33.19-20; 8.64.7; 9.37.2; 12.23; *Lucian, Dial. Mer.* 11.3; *Anth. Pal.* 11.66-9; 11.310; 11.398; 11.408.1. On Ovid's caution and ambivalence on the subject – describing, rather than prescribing as he has up to this point – see Gibson 2003: *ad loc.*

<sup>157</sup> On the artificial as equal or preferable to the natural in this passage, see Downing 1990: 240.

improving their appearance. With none of the moral implications of *cultus* to worry about, he has no reason to disapprove of artificiality; it is the end result that is important, and not the means of achieving it.

Hence also Ovid's advice to women, later in book three, on whether they should let their lovers see them getting dressed in the morning (3.209-50). Almost all the processes of beautification should be hidden, he argues, since they involve unpleasant substances (like the application of cosmetics made from lanolin or deer's marrow, 3.213-15), are unpleasant to watch (like cleaning the teeth, 3.216), or hide ugliness (as a wig does, 3.243-50).<sup>158</sup> The idea that one should not spoil the illusion created by artificial beautification is in violation of another elegiac precedent: the association between *cultus* and dishonesty, which underpins Prop. 1.15, 2.18.23-38, and 3.14. It makes more explicit the concept implied in the passage on dyes and wigs, that dishonest means of achieving beauty are no worse than honest ones (or none at all), as long as their dishonesty is not too blatant. The one exception to the rule, however, proves that the primary goal is not the maintenance of illusion, but the maintenance of attractiveness and decorum. This exception is having one's hair combed and dressed: *at non pectendos coram praebere capillos, / ut iaceant fusi per tua terga, ueto* (3.235-6). Note that the delay of *ueto* makes the fact that this is an exception at all a surprise, thus drawing further attention to it. As hairdressing is a pretty process, a woman can allow her lover to view it – provided that she does not spoil the picture by abusing her *ornatrix*, or revealing that, under all the adornments, she is *male crinita* (3.237-50).<sup>159</sup> Presumably, if the process of putting on make-up or false hair were as nice to look at as that of creating an elaborate hairstyle, Ovid would have no trouble with recommending that these be observed as well. Downing (1990: 241-2) argues that, by associating his addressees with the unformed lumps of bronze that are made into sculpture (3.219-20), and the filthy fleeces that are made into

<sup>158</sup> This idea recurs at *Rem.* 351-6: Ovid advises men to cure themselves of attraction to their mistresses by spying on the repellent processes of beautification.

<sup>159</sup> cf. *Am.* 1.14.13-18 (discussed above).

garments (3.222), Ovid depicts them as naturally repellent, and only fit to be seen if utterly disguised and remade by art. His argument is persuasive, and this is no doubt an important aspect of the passage as a whole. However, he fails to mention or explain the exception represented by hairdressing. I would suggest that the inclusion of this exception expands the idea that dominates the passage – that art makes ugly things beautiful, and that the deception it represents is irrelevant – to include a corollary: that art can also make pretty things prettier, and that, in such cases, even the process itself, the act of deceptively replacing the natural with the artificial, can be beautiful. This appreciation even of artifice that is known to be artifice (so long as it improves pre-existing beauty, rather than hiding ugliness) contradicts Propertius's disapproval of the dishonesty inherent in adorning oneself even more strongly than the wish to be deceived by the artificial.

Thus, though Ovid's preference for moderation over luxury is consistent with elegiac precedent, its context, its stated rationales, and the nature of its finer details mean that, overall, he presents us with a warped and parodic version of earlier elegiac attitudes to *cultus*. Throughout, whether agreeing with the practicalities of Propertius's and Tibullus's statements but skewing the reasoning behind them, or contradicting them more directly, he simplifies his predecessors' arguments, and suggests that they are unrealistic, by contrasting their moral and idealising pronouncements with the 'common sense' of the *praeceptor*. In short, the passages on *cultus* in *Ars* 3 interact with earlier elegy by a mechanism similar to that whereby they interact with Augustus's moral reforms: revealing their unrealistic aspects, deflating their ideals, and making them seem like an impractical imposition on normal conduct. Part of the joke of these passages, then, as elsewhere in the *Ars* (and indeed the *Amores*), is that, among those that the reader is to imagine would be shocked and appalled to read what he or she is reading are not only the traditional moralists and supporters of contemporary moral reform, but the elegists' lover-poet personas themselves.

Part 4: The Elegists on Men's *cultus*

Most of the advice about *cultus* in the *Ars Amatoria* relates to women's hair, dress, and deportment, but Ovid's *praeceptor* persona also has a few things to say about masculine *cultus*. Having already explained to his female pupils that moderation is the best policy when it comes to their own self-beautification, Ovid also warns them against taking lovers who are excessively well-groomed (3.433-52). Men who pay too much attention to their appearance, and who style their own hair (*quique suas ponunt in statione comas*, 3.434), are to be avoided, since they will only deceive you (3.433-6); they are the type to carry on multiple affairs, not only with women but with other adult men (3.437-8).<sup>160</sup> There is also the danger that the *cultissimus*, despite the refined impression given by his perfumed hair (*coma . . . liquido nitidissima nardo*, 3.443), tight shoes, fine togas, and rings, may simply be a lying thief, out to steal women's clothes (3.441-52).

Ovid's advice on women's *cultus* (3.101-250) works by reflecting the reality of a broad spectrum of adornment, and implicitly rejecting the stereotypical opposition between simplicity and excess; his descriptions of men's *cultus*, on the other hand (here and at *Ars* 1.505-24, to be discussed below), rely on very similar stereotypes. Through most periods of Roman history, there was much less variation in men's dress and hairstyles than in women's. The great range of hairstyles available to women from the late Republic onwards meant that, as we have seen, it was mostly those at the extremes (the very simple; the excessively ornate) or those associated with a particular social role (*uittae*; the *nodus*) that communicated specific information about their wearers' morals. Most adult men, meanwhile, particularly through the late Republic and early Empire, seem to have worn their hair quite short, and gone clean-shaven, thus placing the unexceptional norm at the simple end of the spectrum, rather than the middle zone that most women's hairstyles would have occupied. The subject of men's

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<sup>160</sup> On depilation, cited as evidence for this allegation at 3.437, see below, n.165.

*cultus*, like women's, crops up in a broad variety of literature: it is a source of humour in comedy, satire, and epigram, an indicator of character in oratory, philosophy, and history, and a concern of guides on self-presentation.<sup>161</sup> The connotations of the type and level of grooming men adopted could be quite specific. A small and neatly-trimmed beard, for example, made one come across as a young libertine; a full beard was associated with the moral severity and/or the lack of sophistication of the rustic past; and stubble, with mourning or disgrace.<sup>162</sup> While, for women, only elaborate or repeated hairstyling was a sign of immorality and the desire to attract, any obvious attention paid to styling and arranging the hair rather than simply keeping it tidy could imply the same for men.<sup>163</sup> Men might wet their hair with perfumed oils for celebrations and *conuiuia*,<sup>164</sup> but doing so day-to-day, and/or styling it, particularly with curling-irons, carried connotations similar to those of excessive *cultus* for women: of *leuitas* and an immoral lifestyle, both part of a general stigma of effeminacy. The same went for other practices considered excessive and feminine, such as wearing too much jewellery and fine or expensively dyed clothes, or the depilation of the limbs, which Ovid refers to at *Ars* 1.506 and 3.437.<sup>165</sup> This kind of excess could be interpreted as reflecting sexual excess, usually imagined (as at *Ars* 3.435-8) as adulterous and/or promiscuous behaviour both with women and with adult men, the implication being that the *cultissimus* is so generally lascivious as to take on either an active or a passive sexual

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<sup>161</sup> See for example Plaut. *Asin.* 627; *Curc.* 577-80; *Truc.* 608-11; Cic. *De Off.* 1.130; Sen. *Ep.* 114.4; 115.1-2; Quint. *Inst.* 11.3.137; 12.10.47; Mart. 1.9; 1.24; 2.29; 2.36; 3.63; 7.58; 10.65; 11.39.11-12; 12.38; Juv. 2.64-109; Suet. *Nero*, 51; *Otho*, 12.

<sup>162</sup> See Christenson 2004 on these associations and Cicero's use of them in the *Pro Caelio*; for more on Cicero and men's *cultus*, see Heskel 1994 and Dyck 2001.

<sup>163</sup> On the connection between effeminacy of dress and *mollitia* of character and habits, see Tracy 1976; Richlin 1993: 541-3; Edwards 1993: 63-97; Williams 1999: 129-32. Hence the association, which may sound odd to modern, Western ears, between scratching the head with one finger and effeminacy (Plut. *Iul.* 4.4; Sen. *Ep.* 52.12): it demonstrates that a man is afraid to ruin his hairstyle; see Cantarella 1992: 48, n.130-1; Edwards 1993: 63; Santucci 2011: 92-5.

<sup>164</sup> On the perfuming of the hair by both men and women in antiquity, and the image's various implications in literature, see Lilja 1972: 82-8; Stewart 2007: 95-7.

<sup>165</sup> For depilation as a sign of effeminacy, see for example Mart. 6.56, 9.27, 10.65; Quint. *Inst.* 5.9.14; Aul. Gell. 6.12.5. See also Williams 1999: 129-32; Stewart 2007: 92-5. For the connection drawn between body hair and virility, and the idea that depilation is not only a symptom, but a cause of effeminacy, see Gleason 1995: 69-70.

role, indiscriminately.<sup>166</sup> But excessive attention to self-adornment might also suggest more general moral laxity, including even political corruption, because such feminine *leuitas* suggested indifference to ‘manly’ civic virtues.<sup>167</sup> Most of our sources on the implications of masculine *cultus*, of course, are either humorous or moralising, and thus give an exaggerated picture, which is not necessarily to be taken literally, or as reflecting contemporary truths: obviously, not all over-adorned men will have been adulterers, *cinaedi*, and/or political conspirators, and would probably not have been assumed to be so as a matter of course.<sup>168</sup> Like the associations between *cultus* and female morality, though, the connotations of male dress and hairstyles, whatever the reality behind them, could be called upon when needed as a source of symbols for character and conduct, just as Ovid does at *Ars* 1.505-24 and 3.433-52 for comic effect.

Before looking at these passages of the *Ars* in more detail, though, it is interesting to note that they do not reflect or allude to any corresponding concern for masculine *cultus* in earlier elegy. Propertius, Tibullus, and even Ovid himself, in the *Amores*, make very little mention of their own dress. Given the negative implications of concern for one’s own appearance, this is not hugely surprising; considering the attention that they give to feminine *cultus*, though, and their active engagement with the moral connotations thereof, it is worth considering their different approach to men’s dress and hair. Of the three, Tibullus makes the clearest references to men’s *cultus*, but even these are few, brief, and do not refer to his own appearance. His description of Marathus’s attempts at self-beautification (1.8.9-16)<sup>169</sup> certainly relies on the idea that *cultus* as excessive and effeminate as Marathus’s is incongruous in a male. In context, though, and given the fact that Marathus is not quite a

<sup>166</sup> See Edwards 1993: 70-5, 81-4; Williams 1999: 125-7, 142-53.

<sup>167</sup> The most literal meaning of *uirtus*, after all, is ‘manliness’; see McDonnell 2006: 2-11. For effeminate *cultus* paired with political corruption, see Cic. *Pro Sest.* 18-21; *Red. Sen.* 13; *In Cat.* 2.22-3; Tac. *Hist.* 1.30. See also Edwards 1993: 91-2; Barton 1994: 86-8; Heskell 1994: 133-6; Williams 1999: 132-5.

<sup>168</sup> See Edwards 1993: 65-8, 96-7; Kennedy 1993: 38-9; Barton 1994: 85-6; Gleason 1995: 74-6; Williams 1999: 154-9.

<sup>169</sup> Discussed above, pg. 46-51.

grown man, the passage has more thematic relation to women's adornment than men's. Nonetheless, it reflects the idea of obvious attention to one's hair and clothes as an indication of the desire to attract women: an idea that also appears elsewhere in Tibullus. At 1.2.89-96, as a cautionary example to those who mock his sufferings, Tibullus describes a man who once laughed at miserable lovers, but became one himself in old age, and was mocked in turn; among the actions that demonstrate the man's pathetic state is that he now styles his hair (*manibus canas fingere uelle comas*, 1.2.92).<sup>170</sup> In another poem, imagining himself as the slave charged with the duty of keeping Delia safe from seduction, Tibullus warns men who might have designs on her to keep their distance: *tum procul absitis, quisquis colit arte capillos, / et fluit effuso cui toga laxa sinu* (1.6.39-40).<sup>171</sup> If this is the type of man that Tibullus feels he must keep away from Delia, the suggestion is that exaggerated *cultus* indicates not only the attempt to make oneself attractive to women, but possible success. Compare the at times desperate tone of Ovid's warnings to his female pupils about the *cultissimus* (3.439-40), suggesting that their natural inclination would be to fall for such a man.<sup>172</sup>

If it is so attractive, one might have expected the elegists to depict their own personas as *culti* after all. They describe their poetry as *mollis*, and themselves not only as unfit for a proper, manly life, but as slaves to women; this being the case, implications of *mollitia* ought not to dissuade them as strongly as they might dissuade others.<sup>173</sup> References to the lover-poet's own clothes and hair, though, are even fewer than the scanty and fairly generalised

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<sup>170</sup> See below, pg. 136-9.

<sup>171</sup> Loose clothes are a sign of affectation; see Dio Cass. 43.43; Sen. *Ep.* 114.4, 6.

<sup>172</sup> See Gibson 2003: *ad loc.* Consider also the presence of the *cultus adulter* as one of the stock characters in the 'Adultery Mime' that Ovid summarises at *Trist.* 2.497-500, and the effeminate appearance of Propertius's imagined rival at 4.8.23-6. Some extra *cultus* seems to have been considered appealing to boys as well; Tibullus, addressing Priapus, expresses surprise at his success with them, given his unkempt hair and beard (1.4.3-4).

<sup>173</sup> For elegy as *mollis*, see Prop. 1.7.19; 2.1.2; 2.34.41-2; 3.1.19-20; 3.3.17-18. For unfitness for manly pursuits, see Prop. 1.6.19-36; 2.1; 2.7.13-20; 2.15.41-6; 2.19.19-26; 2.34.55-8; 3.1.15-20; 3.3.39-50; 3.4.21-2; 3.5; 3.9; the idea is parodied at Ov. *Am.* 1.9.41-6. On *seruitium amoris*, see below, pg. 103 n.30. On the elegists' engagement with Roman ideals of masculinity, see Sauvage 1983; Wyke 1994a, especially 116-21; Williams 1999: 154-5.

pictures of other *culti uiri* listed so far. Propertius at one point seems to refer to the futility of having soaked his hair in perfume (*nequiquam perfusa meis unguenta capillis / ibat et expenso planta morata gradu*, 2.4.5-6), but the couplet bears little relation to what comes before or after it, is probably displaced from its context, and can tell us little.<sup>174</sup> Perfume is, in any case, less specifically effeminate than styling or curling the hair; in certain contexts it is perfectly usual, and not a clear sign of excess. In Prop. 4.8, Cynthia punishes Propertius for bringing home other women by forbidding him from getting dressed up and strolling under the Porticus Pompei (*tu neque Pompeia spatiabere cultus in umbra*, 4.8.75); like the other places she bans him from, public shows and the theatre (4.8.76-7), this was known as a place to find women,<sup>175</sup> and the word *cultus* reinforces the idea of his wishing to attract. No details on how this excessive grooming might manifest itself are provided, however, and this is in any case the enraged Cynthia's characterisation of Propertius's behaviour, presented in a humorous context, rather than the image of himself that Propertius's own persona is putting forward. Tibullus's description in 1.2 of the older man trying to act like a lover by styling his hair suggests that this is what young lovers tend to do, but this is an indirect description at best. As for what we are told more directly, lack of physical concern for himself, manifesting itself in paleness, thinness, and general ill health, is the most clearly stated aspect of the appearance of the typical elegiac lover,<sup>176</sup> and one might extrapolate from this to suggest that he is also to be imagined as unkempt. There is, however, no positive suggestion to this effect.<sup>177</sup>

Instead, I would suggest that a lack of references to day-to-day *cultus*, whether neglectful, 'sensible', or excessive, allows for emphasis on states of dress, particularly where

<sup>174</sup> Goold places a lacuna only after the couplet; Heyworth, both before and after.

<sup>175</sup> On the Porticus Pompei, see Prop. 2.32.11-12; Ov. *Ars* 1.67-8; 3.387-8; on the games and the theatre, see Ov. *Ars* 1.89-176.

<sup>176</sup> Prop. 1.5.21-2; 2.4.11-14; 2.22.21-2; Tib. 2.3.9-10.

<sup>177</sup> Horace describes neglect of one's *cultus* as typical behaviour for 'mad' poets (*Ars Poet.* 295-301), but even if the description is to be taken to refer to elegy, this tells us nothing about the elegists' picture of themselves.

the hair is concerned, that actively proclaim the elegiac lover's devotion to love and poetry, but do so in a purely positive way, implying *mollitia* of the poetic kind without suggesting *mollitia* of the moral kind<sup>178</sup> (or, on the other hand, unpleasant squalor). The one category of images of the lover-poet's hair with which we are regularly presented is that of his head being perfumed and/or garlanded during *conuiuia* or other celebrations<sup>179</sup> – activities which Propertius, at least, uses as an image of the life of peace, love, and poetry generally (2.15.41-54; 3.5.22) – and of its being wreathed with ivy, myrtle, or laurel, in figurative terms or imagined scenes, as a symbol of special status as a lover and/or poet.<sup>180</sup> In short, when the elegists mention their own *cultus* at all, they tie it, like that of their mistresses, to their elegiac system of values, and depict themselves as inhabiting not a place on the continuous spectrum from under-cultivated rusticity, through simple and morally well-balanced moderation, to over-cultivated and effeminate dandyism, but rather an offshoot all their own, that reflects literary fantasy more than everyday reality. By Ovid's time, the image of the perfumed and garlanded elegiac lover has been well enough established that he can base jokes on it at *Am.* 1.6.37-40, as his speaker tries to convince the doorkeeper that he is harmless by describing the pathetic, poetic figure that he cuts:

*ergo Amor et modicum circa mea tempora uinum  
mecum est et madidis lapsa corona comis.  
arma quis haec timeat? quis non eat obuius illis?  
tempora noctis eunt; excute poste seram.*

Ovid here uses the natural incongruity of love, wine, and wreaths of flowers with war and arms for humorous effect, but, in doing so, reflects more serious uses of the same contrasts to emphasise the lover-poet's separation from the values and concerns of society at large (e.g., Prop. 2.15; Tib. 1.3.49-82). The image of the poet wreathed in ivy, myrtle, or laurel as a

<sup>178</sup> Catull. 16 represents an alternative solution to the same problem; see MacLeod 1973: 300-1; Skinner 1993: 64-7; Schievenin 2000; Mayer 2003: 66-8.

<sup>179</sup> Prop. 1.3.21-2; 1.16.7; 2.15.51-2; 2.34.59; 3.3.47 (lovers in general); 4.6.73-4; Tib. 1.2.14; Ov. *Am.* 1.6.37-40, 67-70.

<sup>180</sup> Prop. 3.1.19-20; 4.1.61-2; Tib. 1.3.66 (lovers in general); Ov. *Am.* 1.15.37; 2.12.1. On wreaths as symbols of poetic inspiration, see Conte 2000: 309, and n. 5; Hohenwallner 2001: 27-30; Hardie 2005: 17-20.

marker of his status, or perfumed and garlanded to demonstrate his devotion to leisure, is, of course, not unique to elegy,<sup>181</sup> but it gains added force when contrasted with the stylish, contemporary *cultus* of their beloveds. As we have seen, especially in Propertius, the lover-poet's attempts to persuade his mistress to abandon her materialistic priorities for more idealised ones, such as devotion to him, reflects the implausibility and conflicted nature of his desires; avoidance of mentioning his own *cultus* except in idealised or purely symbolic contexts emphasises this fundamental separation between the fantasy world that the lover occupies (or would wish to occupy), and the reality that his beloved occupies.

Returning to the *Ars*, then, what are we to make of the very conventional concern with attitudes towards male *cultus* that Ovid displays at 1.505-24 and 3.433-52? As we have seen, his description of the *cultissimus* in the latter passage is entirely in line with negative descriptions of excessive self-adornment in texts that reflect a mainstream point of view on moral matters. Ovid's corresponding advice to men, at 1.505-24, that they should be restrained and moderate in their dress, and go no further than keeping themselves clean and tidy, is equally similar to the societal norm:

*sed tibi nec ferro placeat torquere capillos,  
nec tua mordaci pumice crura teras.  
ista iube faciant, quorum Cybeleia mater  
concinitur Phrygiis exululata modis.  
forma uiros neglecta decet; Minoida Theseus  
abstulit, a nulla tempora comptus acu;  
Hippolytum Phaedra, nec erat bene cultus, amauit;  
cura deae siluis aptus Adonis erat. (1.505-12)*

His specific advice that curled hair and shaved legs will make one look like a *gallus* (1.505-8) – i.e., emasculated – is entirely commonplace, as is the more general idea that men look best when they have not put too much effort into their appearance (1.509-12). Cultivating a *forma neglecta*, though, should not mean slovenliness; Ovid goes on to recommend getting a tan by exercising (1.513), making sure that one's toga and shoes fit well (1.514, 516), keeping one's

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<sup>181</sup> Consider for example Hor. *Carm.* 2.7.5-8; 2.10.13-17; 3.4.17-20.

person clean and inoffensive (1.515, 521-2), and keeping one's hair, nails, and even nose-hair trimmed (1.517-20).<sup>182</sup> Again, this is all entirely in line with mainstream opinion; compare Cicero's advice:

*cum autem pulchritudinis duo genera sint, quorum in altero uenustas sit, in altero dignitas, uenustatem muliebre ducere debemus, dignitatem uirilem. ergo et a forma remoueat omnis uiro non dignus ornatus. . . . formae autem dignitas coloris bonitate tuenda est, color exercitationibus corporis. adhibenda praeterea munditia est non odiosa neque exquisita nimis, tantum quae fugiat agrestem et inhumanam negligentiam. eadem ratio est habenda uestitus, in quo, sicut in plerisque rebus, mediocritas optima est. (De Off. 1.130)*

There is the same emphasis on moderation, represented by cleanliness without excessive adornment, the same association between such excess and effeminacy, and even some of the same specific details, such as the recommendation of a tan achieved through outdoor exercise. Quintilian's advice on *cultus*, too, has much in common with Ovid's: the orator's dress should be, 'like all other respectable men's, sharp and manly' (*ut in omnibus honestis debet esse, splendidus et uirilis*), and neither slovenly nor excessive (*nam et toga et calceus et capillus tam nimia cura quam negligentia sunt reprehendenda, Inst. 11.3.137*). Like Ovid, Quintilian sets moderation as the general principle to be followed:

*do tempori, ne hirta toga sit, non ut serica; ne intonsum caput, non ut in gradus<sup>183</sup> atque anulos comptum, cum eo quod, si non ad luxuriam ac libidinem referas, eadem speciosiora quoque sint, quae honestiora. (Inst. 12.10.47)*

As with his advice to women at *Ars* 3.129ff., Ovid's advice to men here seems so straightforward, sensible, and consistent with other sources, that it could be dismissed as a cheap joke about effeminacy of dress, and nothing more. Again, though, consideration of the full context reveals a more subtle and irreverent message. As Quintilian specifically points out, he, along with Cicero and other moralising sources, is describing the rules that apply to

<sup>182</sup> Romans generally had their nails trimmed by the same *tonsors* who cut their hair and shaved their faces for them, because the tools involved either required two hands, or could be dangerous if wielded inexpertly; see Boon 1991: 23-4, and the ancient sources there cited. I can find no reference to whether the same professionals trimmed nose-hair, or whether this was a job to be performed at home.

<sup>183</sup> For the *coma in gradus formata*, an even fringe of stiff curls over the forehead, see Suet. *Nero* 51; Sande 1996: figs. 1-4.

the *cultus* of men in public life, wishing to communicate their faultless characters. Ovid, on the other hand, ought to be describing what is appropriate for men out to seduce women; the appearance he would have his pupils cultivate is meant to be that which is most attractive, not that which is most consistent with manly *dignitas*. To Cicero or Quintilian, these two are mutually exclusive, but Ovid conflates them. Even the mythical *exempla* he cites, Theseus, Hippolytus, and Adonis (1.509-12), are not simply lovers, but men more famous for being loved than reciprocating that love, emphasising the fact that the goal of the basic *cultus* he recommends is the effect that it will have on women. In the *Ars*, we are not in the world of Quintilian's *honesti*, but of the *luxuria* and *libido* that he explicitly separates his advice from.<sup>184</sup> Ovid's suggestion that his male pupils should look like clean, upstanding orators, then, rather than the libertines they are meant to act like, collapses a dichotomy in much the same way as his advice on women's *cultus* does, even while seeming to uphold it. Ovid does not here suggest that clothes and hairstyles are no indication of conduct; on the contrary, he explicitly and even exaggeratedly links excessive *cultus* with effeminacy. What he does suggest, though, is that the often underhanded, dishonest, and generally amoral and pleasure-seeking conduct that he recommends for his pupils is quite consistent with a well-folded toga and a neat and respectable haircut. In the light of the superficial nature of some of Augustus's attempts to resurrect the *mos maiorum*, including as they did, for example, regulations enforcing the wearing of the toga in the Forum,<sup>185</sup> this is quite as subversive as the later suggestion that moderate *cultus* is no guarantee of moral conduct for women. At the same time, Ovid's suggestion that what applies to a respectable orator applies equally to a lover

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<sup>184</sup> Ovid cannot, of course, be referring to Quintilian in particular; reflecting as it does earlier mainstream opinions such as Cicero's, though, I take Quintilian's advice as representative of popular respectable opinion throughout the period.

<sup>185</sup> See Suet. *Aug.* 40.5; Zanker 1988: 162-5. Suetonius relates that Augustus's enemies, at the time of his conflicts with Lucius and later Mark Antony, spread stories suggesting his immorality and effeminacy, including the rumour that he singed his leg-hair to make it softer (*Aug.* 68.1); if similar stories were still circulating at the time of the writing of the *Ars*, this would add the subtle barb that the *cultus* of Ovid's immoral addressees is more masculine and respectable than that of the hypocritical Augustus himself.

also runs contrary to the picture we have seen in earlier elegy. In advising his pupils to look sharp and manly, he steers them away from embracing what would ordinarily be considered the appearance of a lover, whether of the debauched, over-adorned type, or of the pale and sickly type – or, for that matter, of the idealised, ivy-wreathed lover-poet type. In other words, just as Ovid's addressees in book three are depicted as normal, everyday women, and not the idealised goddesses of Propertian or Tibullan elegy, his addressees in book one are here imagined as normal, everyday men: as members of the mainstream from which the usual elegiac persona seeks to distance himself.<sup>186</sup> In both cases, the rejection of the idea that a respectable appearance has any bearing on one's morals or conduct reinforces Ovid's indifference to the separation of the ideal and the reality that underlies Tibullus's and especially Propertius's approaches to *cultus*. In the world depicted in the *Ars*, moral distinctions based on *cultus* are entirely unreliable and can best be ignored, and as he explains at 3.101-28, the *praeceptor*, like Ovid's lover persona in the *Amores*, prefers it that way.

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<sup>186</sup> See Armstrong (2005: 90-1), who suggests that Ovid is reassuring his male pupils that one does not have to be an effeminate dandy to be a lover. Note, though, that Ovid's advice is tuned to the effect desired at a particular point, and is not unified overall; he later describes the ideal appearance for a lover as pale, lean, and sickly, to support the advice that it should be obvious that one is a lover (*Ars* 1.723-44).

## Chapter 2: Hair-pulling as an Act of Violence

### Introduction

Images of physical violence make frequent appearances in elegy. Even if we limit ourselves to violent scenes presented as occurring within the speaker's own experience, or imagined as plausible events, and omit violent *exempla* and metaphors, we see: quarrels and threats of violence between the lover and his mistress, and other pairs of lovers;<sup>1</sup> fights between the lover and his rivals;<sup>2</sup> the speaker's fantasies of taking violent revenge on his mistress, and/or promises that he will not do so;<sup>3</sup> and his requests for her to take out her anger on him in like manner.<sup>4</sup> Given that the elegists commonly champion their and their genre's passivity, presenting elegy as the opposite of such grim and violent genres as epic or tragedy,<sup>5</sup> and the life of the lover as the opposite of (or as a more 'peaceful' or less 'harmful' equivalent to) that of the soldier,<sup>6</sup> these violent scenes can seem incongruous, and the question of what they are doing in elegy and what they mean has received considerable scholarly attention. This has focused for the most part on the lover's violence towards (or desire to do violence to) his mistress, and especially on determining the tone in which such violence is presented.<sup>7</sup> In a recent examination, James (2003a: 184-97) suggests that it is both an expression of the lover's resentment towards the dominant role his mistress occupies thanks to his love for her – that is, resentment of his role as *seruus amoris* – and a suggestion of his own latent position of power over her, as freeborn man over socially inferior woman

<sup>1</sup> Prop. 2.15.17-20; 3.8.1-4; 4.8.63-6; Tib. 1.10.53-8, 59-64; 2.4.37; 2.5.101-4; Ov. *Am.* 1.7; 2.7.7-8. For anger towards an absent mistress taken out on her doorposts by the locked-out lover, see Prop. 1.16.5-6; Tib. 1.1.73-4; Ov. *Am.* 1.9.20.

<sup>2</sup> Prop. 2.9.49-52; 2.19.5; 2.34.5-6; 3.8.33-4.

<sup>3</sup> Prop. 1.18.13-16; 2.5.19-26; 2.8.25-8; Tib. 1.6.73-4; Ov. *Am.* 1.8.111-12 (frustrated desire to do violence to a *lena*); 2.5.11-12, 45-8.

<sup>4</sup> Prop. 3.8.5-8; Tib. 1.6.37-8, 69-72.

<sup>5</sup> Prop. 1.7; 1.9.9-14; 2.1.1-46; 2.10; 2.34; 3.1; 3.2; 3.3; 3.9; Ov. *Am.* 1.1; 2.1.11-38; 2.18; 3.1; 3.12.15-16.

<sup>6</sup> Prop. 1.6, especially 29-30; 2.7.5-6, 13-18; 2.14.23-4; 2.15.41-6; 2.22.21-34; 2.27.5-12; 3.4; 3.5.1-18, 47-8; 3.8.29-32; Tib. 1.1.1-58, 75-8; 1.2.65-78; 1.3.47-82; 1.10; 2.6.1-12; Ov. *Am.* 1.6.31-40; 1.9; 1.10.19; 1.15.4; 2.12; 3.2.49-50; 3.8.9-22. On *militia amoris*, see Murgatroyd 1975; Cahoon 1988; McKeown 1995; Gale 1997: 78-85.

<sup>7</sup> Sources on each passage will be cited in the course of discussion, but for example, consider the number of articles examining the tone of Ov. *Am.* 1.7 alone: Khan 1966; Stirrup 1973; Tracy 1979; Gössl 1981; Morrison 1992; Greene 1999; Bocchi 2010.

(within the narrative) and as poet over poetic subject (both within and outside the narrative).<sup>8</sup> James is, I think, right to emphasise the connotations of dominance and the exertion of one's will that are inherent in the image of physical violence; in the slave-owning society in which elegy was written, corporal punishment, whether undertaken or implicitly threatened, was a more immediate and symbolically loaded presence in more people's lives than it is today. Living as they did in a context in which one defining feature of citizenship (especially adult, male citizenship) was that it made one exempt from the threat of corporal punishment, but free to inflict it on one's inferiors, the contemporary Roman readership will have felt the symbolic significance of physical violence as a means of defining status and establishing power relationships more strongly. They will have thought in more specific terms about what acts of violence were socially acceptable and which were not – about who were the proper recipients of violence, and who ought to dole it out.<sup>9</sup> James's interpretation, then, ought to be kept in mind throughout the following discussion. But not all the depictions and fantasies of violence in elegy depict the lover's violence towards his mistress. It is important also to consider how this motif relates to the theme of the mistress's violence towards her lover, which has a significant presence. How are we to understand the lover's willingness (or even desire) to experience this particular brand of humiliation at his mistress's hands, and how should it colour our interpretation of his desire to inflict violence on her? It is also worth noting that both these desires are generally frustrated, and considering not only why elegy is so violent in theory, as James and others have done, but why it is so non-violent in practice – why the vast majority of the depictions of violence in elegy are mere fantasies. Actual violence between lovers is common enough in ancient love poetry,<sup>10</sup> so why should elegy so often restrict itself to fantasies of revenge that are never carried out, or to hypothetical

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<sup>8</sup> See also Fredrick 1997; O'Rourke (forthcoming).

<sup>9</sup> On corporal punishment, domestic violence, and free, male identity in Rome, see Saller 1994: 133-53; Walters 1997: 37-42; Clark 1998; Dossey 2008.

<sup>10</sup> See below, pg. 103 n.32.

discussions of what level of violence is appropriate? In this chapter I shall consider these and related questions through an examination of the ways in which a particular act of violence, hair-pulling, is depicted.

Hair-pulling is one of the more frequently mentioned acts of violence in elegy. Men pull women's hair (*Ov. Am.* 1.7.11, 49-50; *Tib.* 1.10.53-4); women pull each other's hair (*Prop.* 3.15.13-14; 4.7.45-6; 4.8.61); in one case, a woman pulls a man's hair (*Ov. Am.* 2.7.7-8).<sup>11</sup> Most often, though, particularly within the relationship of the lover-poet and his mistress, hair-pulling is not actually performed, but merely alluded to: it is contemplated (*Ov. Am.* 1.8.110-12; 2.5.45-8); its acceptability is discussed (*Tib.* 1.10.59-64; *Prop.* 2.5.23-6); or it is put forward as a suggested punishment at his mistress's hands to which the lover is willing to submit (*Prop.* 3.8.5; *Tib.* 1.6.71-2; *Ov. Am.* 1.7.63-6). In all cases, it is depicted as an act of anger, and its goal as the punishment of the recipient. This does not go without saying, since other acts of physical violence of similar or greater severity appearing in elegy, such as biting, or grabbing forceful enough to leave bruises, can occur (or be imagined as occurring) in the course of erotic encounters, and be motivated by desire rather than anger.<sup>12</sup> Hair-pulling, though, is always a vengeful response to perceived wrongs, occurring in contexts of genuine conflict, and, significantly, of uneven conflict: of the establishment or reinforcement of the perpetrator's authority over the victim.<sup>13</sup> Despite what we might perceive as the relatively low severity of hair-pulling as an act of violence (as compared, for example, to blows), the strong symbolic association with the exertion of power suggested by the contexts in which hair-pulling appears in elegy is borne out in examples from other

<sup>11</sup> Self-inflicted hair-tearing will be discussed in the chapter on Dishevelment.

<sup>12</sup> For biting, see *Prop.* 3.8.21-2 (though it is unclear whether these bites are motivated by passion or anger; compare 4.8.65); 4.3.25-6; *Tib.* 1.6.13; 1.8.38; *Ov. Am.* 1.7.41-2 (on which see below, n.68); 1.8.97-8; 3.14.33-4. For grabbing, see *Prop.* 2.15.19-20. For biting and roughness in lovemaking see also *Catull.* 8.18; *Cic. in Verr.* 5.32; *Lucret.* 4.1079-83; *Hor. Carm.* 1.13.9-12; *Plut. Pomp.* 2.2.

<sup>13</sup> See Eitrem 1921: 21: 'To catch captives *by the hair* . . . was a very widespread custom to show that you were the absolute master of the prisoner' (orig. emphasis).

ancient literature,<sup>14</sup> and makes a certain amount of sense. Holding or yanking someone by the hair puts him or her under your control easily, and often places the recipient in a physically lowered (and therefore figuratively humbled) position.<sup>15</sup> It also requires less strength than, for example, holding someone by the limbs, and has a high ratio of pain inflicted versus effort exerted; it thus magnifies the physical power of the hair-puller. This helps to explain why the characters in the passages to be discussed are never figured as equal combatants, as they might be in references to wrestling, fighting, or armed combat: because of the disproportionate advantage it grants, in an equal contest, hair-pulling, like biting or scratching, is considered ‘fighting dirty’. It is thus more often associated with scenes of disorganised violence, especially those prompted by the temporary insanity brought on by strong emotions: bursts of violent anger, women’s violence, the excessive punishment of slaves, or battles that have devolved into chaotic free-for-alls.<sup>16</sup> Given both the general symbolic value of violence as a statement of one’s power over others and these more specific associations of hair-pulling, an examination of the ways in which the act is depicted and discussed by the elegists, taking full account of who pulls (or wants to pull) whose hair, and whether the act is actually carried out, or only discussed or contemplated, can tell us a great deal about the power relationships in elegy, particularly that between the lover-poet and his mistress.

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<sup>14</sup> For hair-pulling as a means of dragging someone from a place against his or her will, see Plaut. *Menaech.* 870, *Merc.* 798, *Rud.* 784; Verg. *Aen.* 2.403-4; Ov. *Her.* 14.83; *Met.* 12.223; 13.410; Appian, *Bell. Ciu.* 4.17; Lucian, *Dial. Mer.* 10.1, 15.1; Philostr. *Apoll. of Tyana* 1.36. For hair-pulling in scenes of rape, see Ter. *Eun.* 646; Ov. *Met.* 6.552; Sen. *Phaed.* 731-2.

<sup>15</sup> Consider, for example, the instances of hair-pulling in the *Metamorphoses* that preface transformations into four-legged animals: Ov. *Met.* 2.476-7; 9.316-19.

<sup>16</sup> In addition to the instances cited in n.14 above, consider Plaut. *Truc.* 286-7; Ter. *Eun.* 860; Ov. *Her.* 3.77-82; *Met.* 12.348; Juv. 6.490. On hair-pulling (and biting, scratching, etc.) as tactics characteristic of women, see Edgecombe 1998: 121-2.

### Part 1: Women Pulling Women's Hair

It will be useful to begin with a brief examination of situations in which one woman pulls the hair of another woman, motivated by jealous rage (Prop. 3.15.13-14; 4.7.45-6; 4.8.61). These passages are a good place to start in part because they are instances of violence carried out by someone in a clear position of authority – against slaves, in the first two instances – and are uncomplicated by the complex and shifting power balance that characterises the relationship between the lover-poet and his mistress. They thus make a relatively straightforward place to observe some of the basic connotations of hair-pulling, upon which the more complex ideas developed in the passages to be discussed below are based. These passages are also important in that they present instances of violence actually being carried out by a woman against those under her authority; their precedent will thus be relevant later in looking at the lover's desire for such violence to be directed towards him.

At Prop. 3.15.13-14, Dirce repeatedly pulls Antiope's hair and slaps her face, as part of the torture she puts her through for having slept with her (Dirce's) husband. Her punishment of Antiope is extremely severe, including also hard labour, imprisonment, and starvation (3.15.15-18). Hair-pulling may seem an incidental detail in such a list of sufferings, but, as the head of that list, it plays a significant role in establishing the tone of what follows. In other words, it is not just another act of violence, but actively contributes to the theme of jealous anger, and the characterisation of Antiope as a pitiable victim and of Dirce as harsh and cruel. These are important ideas for the speaker to emphasise in an *exemplum* of the dangers of jealousy.<sup>17</sup> Every word in the short but sharp description (*a quotiens pulchros uulsit regina capillos*, 3.15.13) serves to emphasise the viciousness of Dirce and elicit pity for Antiope. The saddened exclamation, *a*, sets the tone, while *quotiens* has us understand that this was a frequent occurrence, and that Dirce's actions are the result

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<sup>17</sup> On the relationship of the *exemplum* to its frame narrative – Propertius's plea to Cynthia not to be jealous of a certain Lycinna – see Yardley 1974, Butrica 1994; both argue convincingly that Lycinna is to be imagined as Cynthia's own servant.

not of a single lapse into maddened rage, but of protracted and disproportionate hatred. Applied to hair, the verb *uulsit* suggests not simply pulling, but pulling *out*,<sup>18</sup> conveying the force with which Dirce wrenched Antiope's hair. And Propertius specifies that the *capilli* in question were *pulchri*, adding to the pathos of the scene by pointing out the marring of something beautiful that is inherent in the act, and implying that envy of Antiope's beauty is an additional, petty motivation for Dirce's fierceness. Calling Dirce *regina*, too, emphasises her position of power over the helpless Antiope, and thus her abuse of it. As Butrica explains (1994: 148), various aspects of the story, such as the identification of Antiope as Dirce's slave (*famulam*, 3.15.15) rather than simply a captive, seem to have been invented by Propertius, and inserted to emphasise those aspects of the *exemplum* most relevant to the frame story of Cynthia's jealousy (and mistreatment? 3.15.43-4) of Lycinna. The hair-pulling seems to be another such addition. Propertius's account mixes elements from the two versions of the story told by Hyginus (*Fab.* 7-8),<sup>19</sup> but in neither of those accounts is any mention made of Dirce pulling Antiope's hair. Instead, in the second version only, it is Dirce who is tied to a bull by the hair. Whether Propertius has chosen to include a detail from a shared source that Hyginus has omitted, transplanted the idea of violence done to hair from Dirce to Antiope, or invented the hair-pulling detail himself, then, it does seem to have been included with deliberate intent, as a way of characterising Dirce's jealous anger and the violence it leads her to as the disproportionate and petty abuse of her position of power. Given the frame story, this negative conception applies also to Cynthia's (current or potential) cruelty towards Lycinna.

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<sup>18</sup> OLD, s. u. *uello*, 1.

<sup>19</sup> Hyginus gives no source for the first version, but it contains the detail of Dirce's jealousy as the motivation for her treatment of Antiope, which is absent from other tellings of the story; compare Apollod. *Bibl.* 3.5.5; Paus. 9.17.4-6; 9.25.3. It thus seems probable that either this version or its (Hellenistic?) source was known to Propertius. The second version is credited to Euripides (an interpolator adds Ennius, but this is probably a mistake for Pacuvius, as Boriaud explains (1997: 16, n.1)), and was thus almost certainly known to Propertius; see Alfonsi 1961. Pacuvius's translation of Euripides's play survives only in fragments, making comparison difficult. Mention is made of the dirty and bedraggled state of Antiope's hair in extant passages, but not of any pulling or tearing (see frag. VIII and X, d'Anna 1968: 50-1). On Propertius's probable sources, and careful mingling of elements from different versions of the story, see Yardley 1974: 431, n.11; Butrica 1994: 146-8.

At Prop. 4.7.45-6, hair-pulling again occurs in the context of the torture of an inferior. Chloris, the rival who has usurped the place of the dead Cynthia in Propertius's household as well as his affections, is described as having the slave Lalage hung up by her twisted hair and beaten. The description is the most brutal of several examples, cited by Cynthia's ghost, of the mistreatment of Propertius's slaves under their (and his) new mistress (4.7.41-6). The act, like Dirce's, is motivated by jealousy, though indirectly (Lalage incurred Chloris's wrath by begging for something in Cynthia's name) and, again, is clearly meant to be seen as excessive and cruel, and as an inappropriate abuse of a position of power. Cynthia's object is to shame Chloris for lording it over a household that she has achieved dominance over so recently and by such questionable means (4.7.35-40), and, thus, to shame Propertius for his weakness in allowing this to happen.<sup>20</sup> As in 3.15, then, using an image such as hair-pulling, that itself bears connotations of the exaggeration of one's power and the imposition of one's authority (and magnifying its brutality – Chloris actually hangs the girl up by her hair), emphasises that message.

The third instance of a woman pulling other women's hair, in Prop. 4.8, provides a telling contrast to those in 3.15 and 4.7, and one which should be kept in mind as we move on to discuss the lover's desire for his mistress to treat him harshly, as its juxtaposition of Cynthia's violence towards her rivals with her violence towards the speaker himself is the main factor in the differences to be observed between this poem and those already examined. In 3.15 and 4.7, violence, and hair-pulling in particular, is a clear symbol of abuse of power, is carried out by figures whom the speaker wishes to characterise as heartless and cruel, and is depicted in purely negative terms. Both descriptions recall the stereotype of the wrathful woman using excessive force in punishing her slaves, which is a topos of comedy, mime, and

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<sup>20</sup> On controlling women's immoderate anger towards slaves as one of the duties of a Roman (male) head of household, see Clark 1998: 124. Cynthia herself, of course, has threatened to torture her own slaves, Lygdamus and Nomas, not ten lines earlier, but in these cases the offence was conspiracy to murder, not affection for a past mistress.

satire,<sup>21</sup> but suppress the scenario's comic potential in favour of an emphasis on the source of that humour: the inappropriate and shameful nature of the action. In 4.8, in which it is Cynthia who pulls her rivals' hair and re-establishes her authority over others through violence, and in which Propertius is himself one of the recipients of that violence, we see the opposite process in action: the suppression of the shameful nature of feminine anger, and the adaptation of its humorous possibilities to an elegiac context.

The description of the hair-pulling itself is very brief, consisting only of an observation of its results. Propertius has invited two girls, Teia and Phyllis, to keep him company in Cynthia's absence; she returns, lays waste to the party, drives the girls from Propertius's house, and they flee *direptisque comis tunicisque solutis* (4.8.61). Propertius is put back into line through a physical assault as well, and a much more prolonged and vicious one – Cynthia slaps, bites, and beats him (4.8.64-7) – but hair-pulling, along with face-scratching (4.8.57), is reserved for her two rivals. The principle that hair-pulling is an act perpetrated on one's inferiors as a means of reinforcing one's dominance holds good here: Cynthia is reconquering Propertius's household and re-establishing her authority over it. But there is more to it than that; after all, Propertius is more Cynthia's slave than Teia and Phyllis are, so the act's connotations of domination cannot explain the different types of violence offered to each. Instead, the distinction between the type and level of violence Cynthia offers her lover and her rivals reflects her specific grievances: each punishment fits the crime. In striking Propertius, Cynthia pays special attention to his eyes; given that Propertius singles out this punishment as the one that he has deserved (4.8.66), it is reasonable to assume that both he and Cynthia understand it to be the penalty for his having looked at other women.<sup>22</sup> By scratching the girls' faces and tearing at their hair, meanwhile, Cynthia mars their attractiveness – the means by which, to her mind, they have done her injury – much as Dirce

<sup>21</sup> On which, see Clark 1998: 122-4; Harris 2001: 264-76; Fountoulakis 2007: 253-4.

<sup>22</sup> See O'Neill 2005: 263. Note also that the terms of his 'treaty' with Cynthia are designed to limit his chances of letting his eyes wander again (4.8.75-8).

spoils Antiope's *pulchri capilli*. This is reinforced by the word *direptis*; Cynthia has not simply pulled or torn the girls' hair to cause them pain, but has specifically torn it apart, disarranging their hairstyles. It is worth noting here that Cynthia herself does not have her hair done elaborately: she enters the scene *non operosa comis* (4.8.52), presumably because she has been travelling.<sup>23</sup> We have seen in the previous chapter how closely the hair's *cultus* is associated with the desire to attract; Cynthia's attack on the girls' hair thus 'disarms' them, and visually as well as symbolically re-establishes her threatened superiority. Cynthia's treatment of Teia and Phyllis, though perhaps less fierce than her treatment of Propertius in terms of actual physical damage done, also shows more contempt. She makes her point about her dominance over them as briefly as possible, and then, whether fleeing of their own will or ejected, they are removed from the scene. By contrast, Cynthia makes an extended show of humiliating Propertius, treating him like a slave or a captive (4.8.70), and leaving him willing to agree to any terms to put an end to her wrath (4.8.71-82). But this is only a demonstration, and temporary: the two do, after all, end up back in bed together by the end of the poem (4.8.88). And Cynthia is not an example of the negative aspects of wrath, like Dirce or Chloris; on the contrary, she is *furibunda decens* (4.8.52). Her imperiousness and violence are depicted as impressive and attractive rather than petty and shameful, because, by implication, they are linked not only with her love for Propertius, but his love for her: the violence she offers her rivals and Propertius shows her contempt for them and their attractions, and her proprietary feelings over him. And she dominates her rivals not only by virtue of her formidable nature, but by extension of her reign over Propertius's affections. Ineffective as usurpers (*cantabant surdo, nudabant pectora caeco*, 4.8.47), they are equally unable to defend themselves; Propertius, for similar reasons, has no power (or inclination?) to

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<sup>23</sup> Her simple hairstyle perhaps also proves that Propertius was mistaken in his suspicions about her reasons for leaving town (4.8.15-26); such styles, as we have seen, suggest virtuous disregard for attracting lovers. As Propertius's suspicions were the excuse for his rebellion, the depth of his terror upon seeing Cynthia (4.8.53-4) seems doubly justified.

defend them, or himself, either.

Thus, although Cynthia is motivated by pure jealousy, and offers violence to her helpless inferiors, just as Dirce does in 3.15 and Chloris does in 4.7, the combination of the presence of Propertius as one of her victims and the implicit recognition of love as the motivation and facilitator of her violence puts the whole scenario through the prism of the uneven power dynamics of the (ideal) elegiac relationship. As a result, instead of being decried, female wrath and abuse of power is practically celebrated, leading as it does to the consummation that ends the poem. The scene is humorous, but not only or even primarily because it engages the shameful and incongruous nature of women's wrath, as comedy, mime, or satire might, but because of the various ironies and twists on its source material made possible by the transplantation of elegiac characters and attitudes into a scenario evoking those genres. Cynthia is characterised not simply as the stereotypical enraged mistress of the house, cruelly abusing her slaves, but as a complex and 'elegiacised' amalgam of that character, the suspicious wife familiar from comedy, a gender-swapped version of the jealous husband in the 'Adultery Mime', and a burlesqued Odysseus, purging her domain of usurpers.<sup>24</sup> This difference in the portrayal of the violent woman in 4.8 as compared with 3.15 and 4.7, born of the presence of the *seruus amoris* as one of its victims, which shows her transformed from a relatively stable type-character into a complex and ambiguous figure, drawing on and skewing assumptions drawn from a variety of other genres, should inform our understanding of the attitude of the elegiac lover toward the prospect of being the object of his mistress's violence, to be discussed at greater length in the next section.

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<sup>24</sup> On the influence of mime and comedy on 4.8, see Yardley 1972: 135-6; Dee 1978; McKeown 1979: 74-5; Fantham 1986: 54-5 and n. 32, 1989: 158. On the Odyssean character of 4.8, see Evans 1971; Currie 1973; Hubbard 1974: 152-6; Dalzell 1980: 33-4; Warden 1996: 127-8.

## Part 2: Women Pulling Their Lovers' Hair

Several important features differentiate the scenes of violence between lovers depicted in elegy from similar scenes in other genres of ancient literature. In this section, I shall examine one of these features, of which we have had a preview above: its incorporation of images of women's violence towards their lovers. Though men's violence towards their beloveds is a common theme in other ancient love poetry,<sup>25</sup> women's violence is not. It is, as we have seen in looking at Prop. 4.8, associated instead with comedy, mime, or satire, because of its inherent incongruity, and the humiliation it inflicts on the man who endures it, characterising him as ridiculous or weak.<sup>26</sup> Elegy makes distinctly unconventional use of the same inverted power relationship. Rather than being beleaguered and pathetic, the speaker is generally happy to submit to his mistress's violence, and positively encourages her to express her authority over him physically. These wishes are sometimes clearly hyperbolic expressions of slavish devotion: the lover's emotional sufferings are frequently described through metaphors of chains, burns and brands, and other tortures; offers to suffer these pains in return for the opportunity to be close to his beloved are thus also common, but remain metaphorical.<sup>27</sup> His offers of submission to harsh treatment are, however, sometimes presented as more plausible requests, which complicates their interpretation: Tibullus includes among a list of his wishes for himself and Delia that she should drag him through the streets by the hair when she suspects him (even wrongly) of infidelity (1.6.71-2); and Propertius, having experienced Cynthia's rage during an argument, encourages future acts of violence, hair-pulling among them (3.8.1-10).<sup>28</sup> What are we to make of these offers, and why should hair-pulling have been prominently included in both?

The prospect of being mistreated, and especially having his hair pulled, by his

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<sup>25</sup> See below, n.32.

<sup>26</sup> See Fantham 1989: 158, 160; Rei 1998; Schroeder 2004: 415, 423-4; Fountoulakis 2004, especially 253-4.

<sup>27</sup> Consider Prop. 1.1.27; 1.9.17-22; 2.1.65-70; 2.9.37-40; 2.17.5-10; Tib. 1.5.5-6; 1.6.37-8; 1.9.21-2; 2.3.79-80; 2.4.1-6, 55-60.

<sup>28</sup> See also *Am.* 1.7.63-6, discussed below, pg. 122.

enraged mistress is an attractive prospect to the elegiac lover-poet for several reasons, all of which interact in Tib. 1.6 and Prop. 3.8. For one thing, especially if it is as extreme, undeserved, and publicly humiliating as that which Tibullus suggests for himself in 1.6, such mistreatment is appealing for precisely the same reason that makes women's violence grotesque and undesirable in comedy or satire: because it so thoroughly suggests the lover's submission to his mistress.<sup>29</sup> Happily suffering treatment that is humiliating for a free citizen reinforces the lover's status as his mistress's slave, and is thus a sign of his devotion, literalising as it does the *seruitium amoris* concept that is central to much of love elegy.<sup>30</sup> Though the postures of the characters are not clearly described in any of the passages cited, we should note that hair-pulling often involves the victim being dragged to his or her knees;<sup>31</sup> this aspect of hair-pulling increases its power to debase and humiliate, and thus the force of the devotion implied by willingness to undergo it. As another benefit, jealous anger strong enough to be expressed by physical violence towards one's lover suggests the force of one's affections, making the whole display, in the mind of the elegiac lover at least, a mutual expression of love: this idea is implicit in Tib. 1.6, but expressed explicitly by Propertius (*nimirum ueri dantur mihi signa caloris: / nam sine amore graui femina nulla dolet*, 3.8.9-10). This is not a concept that is peculiar or original to the elegists, but their preference for being the object of such violence is so,<sup>32</sup> and clearly became recognisable enough as an elegiac trope for Ovid to base jokes on it in the *Ars Amatoria*: he suggests to his male pupils,

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<sup>29</sup> See Sauvage 1983: 832. On public humiliation magnifying the debasing effect of corporal punishment for an adult citizen, see Saller 1994: 136-7.

<sup>30</sup> On *seruitium amoris* and its literary history, see Copley 1947; Lyne 1979; Murgatroyd 1981; Laigneau 1999: 328-35. As they explain, this topos, though not original to Latin elegy, is more central and more fully developed here than it had been in earlier genres of love poetry. On some of the more subtle implications of elegiac *seruitium amoris*, taking into account how the construct will have been perceived and understood by a slave-owning readership, see McCarthy 1998; Fitzgerald 2000: 72-8; James 2003a: 145-50.

<sup>31</sup> See above, n.15.

<sup>32</sup> For an overview of this theme in Greek and Latin poetry, see Yardley 1976. In other genres, the woman is generally the recipient of jealous violence: see Aristoph. *Plut.* 1013-16; *Anth. Pal.* 5.41, 43 (Rufinus); 5.218 (Agathias Scholasticus), 248 (Paulus Silentiarius); Theocr. *Id.* 14.34-6; Ter. *Adelph.* 120-1; *Eun.* 771-816; Hor. *Carm.* 1.13.9-12; 1.17.25-8; Lucian, *Dial. Mer.* 8; 15.2. On Menander's *Perikeiromene*, in which a soldier forcibly shears off his concubine's hair, see below, pg.116.

as part of his advice on how to be a proper *seruus amoris*, that they should endure a mistress's violence because it proves her love (2.447-54; hair-pulling, 451), and even advises his female pupils to convince a lover that his affection is returned by *feigning* jealous rages (3.673-80).

The continuation of the former passage from the *Ars* (2.447-54), too, has bearing on the poems in hand, introducing a third reason why women's violence is an attractive idea: Ovid informs his pupils that the high emotion involved in a quarrel leaves a woman receptive to sexual advances (2.455-66). Though this is not exactly the implication in either of the main passages in question, the erotic element does play a part. The actual treatment that Cynthia has been offering Propertius in 3.8 – verbal abuse, an overturned table, and thrown wine-cups (3.8.1-2, 3-4) – has not involved direct physical contact; his suggestions for further violence, though – hair-pulling, face-scratching, threats to burn his eyes out, clothes-tearing, and biting (3.8.5-8, 21-2) – are not only more severe, but very hands-on in comparison. The implication is perhaps that any reason for Cynthia to put her hands on him is better than none at all. At least some of the acts of abuse that he encourages also seem to be attractive to him in their similarity to acts of love. One might, for example, compare the garment-tearing – which is expressed in terms focusing not on the damage to his clothes, but on his desire for her to bare his body (*fac mea rescisso pectora nuda sinu!*, 3.8.8) – to that with which he threatens Cynthia at 2.15.17-18, in passionate enthusiasm rather than in anger *per se*.<sup>33</sup> Hair-pulling does not as clearly fall into this category, but we should not discount the possibility that it would be read as erotically charged both in this passage and that from Tibullus, involving as it does both physical contact with one's mistress and strong implications of submission to her will. Compare the scene in Prop. 4.8 described above, in which Cynthia's expressions of mastery over Propertius through physical violence culminate in the sealing of

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<sup>33</sup> The same applies to biting: see above, n.12.

their ‘treaty’ in bed: this is precisely the kind of imperiousness that is wished for in the passages in question.

Another connection between these wishes for physical violence and the elegiac lover’s wishes for sexual contact with his mistress, however – and another important way in which these scenes diverge from descriptions of women’s violence in other genres – is that it is in neither passage suggested that the desired assaults are likely to be carried out; these requests are as futile as those in a typical *paraklausithyron*. Tibullus’s wish for Delia to be passionate enough about him to become violent is set among wishes for her to be faithful to him (1.6.55-6, 67-8, 75-86); his repetition of these wishes, and his general desperation, expressed by reminders of the curses that befall the unfaithful, indicate that both his desires are probably in vain.<sup>34</sup> Propertius, meanwhile, has both Cynthia’s evident ill-will and a rival to deal with (*at tibi, qui nostro nexisti retia lecto*, etc., 3.8.37ff.), and there is nothing in the poem to suggest that the speaker’s wishes are anything but fantasy.<sup>35</sup> The scenarios described, then, strongly as the lover proclaims his willingness to be his mistress’s slave, suggest that she may not necessarily be willing to accommodate him in this arrangement.

Taken together, the lover’s enjoyment of the idea of enduring violence at his mistress’s hands (particularly if it is demeaning and/or erotically charged) and her indifference to his requests reveal something of the status of *seruitium amoris* as a framework: it is, in a sense, a construct not only of the poet, but of his persona. This is not to say that his slavery is entirely voluntary – on the contrary, it is generally presented as imposed on him against his will, by Amor, or by the irresistible force of his mistress’s beauty<sup>36</sup> – but only that, though the principle that he is a ‘slave’ affects the lover’s behaviour, and guides his actions, it has little bearing on the conduct of his mistress. In other words,

<sup>34</sup> On the hopelessness of Tibullus’s desire for fidelity here, see Lee-Stecum 1998: 200-1.

<sup>35</sup> On the element of self-delusion in Propertius’s assertions in 3.8 that Cynthia is only so angry because she loves him, has only taken up with another man to spite him, etc., see Gold 1984: 162-4.

<sup>36</sup> Prop. 1.1.1-6, 33-4; 1.4.1-14; 1.7.7-8; 1.12.17-20; 2.2.1-2; 2.3.1-22; 2.29a; 2.30.7-8; Tib. 1.1.55-6; 1.5.39-44; 1.8.5-6; 2.4.4, 25-6, 52; Ov. *Am.* 1.2.17-20.

though Delia, Cynthia, and company may sometimes exert their power over their lovers, and act in an imperious manner, they rarely acknowledge and literalise their lovers' role as their slaves by offering them physical violence. When Cynthia's jealousy does drive her to pummel and humiliate Propertius in 4.8, this is depicted, much like her granting of sexual favours at the end of the same poem, as the rare realisation of what is usually a mere fantasy for the lover-poet, and not as a matter of course.<sup>37</sup> In the end, the elegiac speaker's willingness to undergo violence and humiliation at his mistress's hands, like his 'chains', and the 'fire and iron' with which he is (willing to be) tortured, says more about his own attitude to his relationship than its realities.

Various critics have described how, in a sense, *seruitium amoris* grants the lover-poet as much power as it robs him of;<sup>38</sup> the fantasy element of the beloved's participation in this construct suggests that the whole process is also, as far as physical violence goes, largely risk-free.<sup>39</sup> One might, then, be tempted to suggest a cynical reading of Tibullus's and Propertius's requests for violence: that the lover is manipulatively seeking the advantages to be gained from professing a state of 'slavery', knowing that he will not have to walk the walk. More likely, though, his offers to submit to violence are an instance of the speaker's wilful self-delusion, and the implied frustration of his wishes an instance of the lack of correspondence between the ideal relationship he envisions for himself and his mistress, and the reality. Having embraced the role of *seruus amoris*, he projects onto his beloved the complementary figure of the passionately jealous and violent mistress of mime, comedy, or satire, adapted for an elegiac context; but she does not conform to this role much more readily or consistently than she does to that of the faithful wife. The one case in which an elegiac mistress actually does pull her lover's hair, then, at *Am. 2.7.7* (*si quam laudauit*,

<sup>37</sup> Both should be seen in the context of 4.8 as Cynthia's swan-song: in her last appearance in Propertius's poetry, she finally acts just as he has always wanted her to (in contrast to his own lapses in the same poem). See Dee 1978: 52-3.

<sup>38</sup> Kennedy 1993: 56, 73-5; Oliensis 1997: 152-3; McCarthy 1998, especially 174-8.

<sup>39</sup> See James 2003a: 145-50, on the conspicuous lack of onerous duties attached to the lover's state of servitude.

*miseros petis ungue capillos*) can be seen as a parodic take on this process: a realisation of the more typical elegiac lover's frustrated desires, by a decidedly untypical elegiac lover, who bears such treatment, but certainly does not appreciate it.<sup>40</sup> For Ovid in 2.7, if not for Propertius in 4.8, the reality of a woman's jealous violence turns out not to be as much fun as it is in theory.<sup>41</sup>

### Part 3: Men Pulling Their Beloveds' Hair in Tibullus and Propertius

It ought to be the case that the *seruus amoris* would never dare to exert physical authority over his mistress by offering her violence or pulling her hair in the way in which she is free to pull his, and, with one notable exception (Ov. *Am.* 1.7, which is to be examined in part 4) this is the case. However, Tibullus, at 1.10.53-66, and Propertius, at 2.5.21-6, do both discuss the acceptability of hair-pulling, and of violence towards one's mistress in general: is it acceptable at all? If not, why not? Are some kinds of violence all right, and others not? Though some intertextual cut and thrust between the two poets creates the appearance of a greater difference in their personas' attitudes than actually exists, they come to similar conclusions on most of these issues. Examination of these passages will shed further light on the nature of *seruitium amoris*, and on what the elegists' play with the boundaries it imposes means for each poet's conception of the nature of elegy and its conventions.

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<sup>40</sup> Note the reversal of Tibullus's willingness to undergo such punishments even if undeserved (*immerito*, 1.6.72) in Ovid's gripe that he wouldn't mind so much if he were actually guilty (2.7.11-12) – an ironic comment given that he is, in fact, guilty. Note too that the context (*Am.* 2.7 and 8, the paired poems on Ovid's affair with Corinna's hairdresser, Cypassis) is one of play on the complexities of the mistress/slave relationship. Watson (1983: 91-2) and Laigneau (1999: 172-5) point out the parallels between 2.7 and Prop. 3.15; in the hair-pulling image, sympathy for the innocent Antiope/Lycinna, rather than being transferred to Cypassis, has been replaced by the speaker's own disingenuous self-pity.

<sup>41</sup> Dr Donncha O'Rourke has pointed out to me (by correspondence) that the elegiac lover's attitude to his mistress's violence is essentially paradoxical: her aloofness puts him in the degrading position of begging her to feel strongly enough to offer him violence, but submitting to her violence would simply degrade him in a different way. Propertius's and Tibullus's desire for their mistresses to express violent anger is thus not a plain wish to be subjugated (they already are), but to be subjugated on their own terms; is this a loss of power, or a gain?

At Tib. 1.10.53-8, in a particularly brutal scene, a farmer, quarrelling with his wife upon their return from a rural festival, breaks down the door, strikes her face, and tears her hair; both end up weeping, she in pain and distress, and he in remorse.<sup>42</sup> The scene leads Tibullus to leave behind the musings on the advantages of the rural life over that of the soldier that have dominated the poem thus far, and move into a discussion of the level of violence towards one's mistress that is acceptable. He has harsh words for the man who actually strikes his beloved: he is stone and iron; he casts the gods down from the sky (1.10.59-60).<sup>43</sup> Tearing her clothes from her body, though, ruining her hairdo, and moving her to tears, are, he states, perfectly acceptable (1.10.61-3). In fact, the man whose rage can make his mistress cry is *quater beatus* (1.10.63-4). This is all rather surprising in context; the concept that the happiest of elegiac lovers is the one who can frighten his mistress to tears seems out of place in a poem in praise of peace. And the idea that jealous violence is evidence of the depth of one's love does not cover the situation here: surely the object of that violence can be expected to weep whether she is in love or not. James argues that the passage is an example of an undercurrent in the works of all three elegists, of the lover's desire for revenge against his mistress for the pain she has caused him (2003:107-9). This essentially malicious tone would, however, endanger the contrast between the violence of the farmer and that of the lover. The farmer, after all, feels remorse for what he has done; the suggestion that the lover enjoys his mistress's tears because he takes pleasure in her distress itself would make him seem crueller than his counterpart, at least in intent. To make sense of the passage, then, there must be some further benefit to be gained from one's mistress's tears.

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<sup>42</sup> Though domestic violence was more tolerated in Rome than in our society, this toleration extended only to 'correction' of a disobedient wife's behaviour (as a Roman parent might also offer to a child), and not to habitual wife-battering or excessive brutality (see Clark 1998; Schroeder 2004: 414-17; Dossey 2008). The farmer's drunken violence in this scene would thus probably have struck the contemporary reader as distasteful even without the value judgements that follow the description.

<sup>43</sup> Compare Tibullus's statement, at 1.6.73-4, that he would sooner have his arms drop off than strike Delia. He does, at 1.1.73-4, seem to approve of breaking doors and having angry rows, but neither of these necessarily involves the physical harm of one's beloved.

Hair-pulling is the only act that is present in the descriptions both of the farmer's violence towards his wife and of the suggested level of acceptable violence towards one's *puella*, and so makes a convenient basis for comparison, particularly since the terms used to refer to it are very different in the two descriptions. The farmer's wife is left bewailing her *scissos capillos* (1.10.53), a phrase describing the violent and painful tearing of hair,<sup>44</sup> whereas Tibullus suggests that it should be enough simply to make a mess of a girl's hairstyle (*ornatus dissoluisse comae*, 1.10.62). The contrast between the tearing in the first image and the disordering in the second makes the latter sound less cruel than it might on its own. Clearly, the difference in connotation between the violence of the farmer and the violence of the elegiac lover is meant to be fully felt. This being the case, I would suggest that there is also a progression from more to less severe within the list of three actions suggested by Tibullus. It runs from clothes-tearing, the most permanently destructive of the three,<sup>45</sup> through hair-mussing, which is a similarly unwelcome physical imposition, but can more easily be repaired; to making one's mistress cry by means of one's anger in itself: that is, presumably, by one's words. There would then be an implied sense in the troublesome couplet 1.10.63-4 that it is not so much the simple ability to make a girl cry that is to be prized – even the farmer in the preceding passage can do that – but the ability to make her cry without recourse to physical violence, even of the comparatively mild variety. This sensitivity on her part to her lover's feelings might indeed, in an elegiac context, suggest that she is not *dura* after all (note *tenera*, 1.10.64), and would thus be cause for happiness.

This squares well with the lines that follow. The wish that he who uses his hands savagely should keep to warfare and leave Venus alone (1.10.65) not only reiterates the difference between the rustic and the lover-poet, but implies a greater similarity between the

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<sup>44</sup> *OLD*, s. u. *scindo*, 5b. Most of the examples cited describe women tearing their hair in grief (on which see below, pg. 183, 208ff.), and pair it with face-scratching and/or breast-beating violent enough to draw blood; this should give a sense of the degree of violence imagined.

<sup>45</sup> And potentially the most expensive: see James (2003: 109 n.33), on Prop.4.5.31-2 and Ov. *Ars* 2.169-72.

rustic and the soldier than is granted in the earlier part of the poem: both are savage with their hands, but in different contexts. The final couplet, consisting of a prayer for the benefits of Peace, begins *at nobis*: this implies that the fruits of peace are being requested by and for the lover and his type, as the *at* suggests a distinction between the speaker and those described in the preceding couplet. Taken as a whole, then, the message of 1.10.53-68 would seem to be that, charming as the rural life may be, and far removed as it is from the life of the soldier in most respects, one can only expect to benefit fully from the blessings of Peace if one avoids physical violence in private life as well as on the battlefield. In other words, the life of the elegiac lover, who prefers visually dramatic and emotionally intense but less genuinely violent quarrels, and can avoid even minor acts of violence if his angry words are enough to provoke a reaction from his suitably responsive *puella*, is preferable not only to the violent life of the soldier, but even to that of the uncultivated rustic.<sup>46</sup>

Tib. 1.10.53-68, then, presents itself as supporting non-violence, but relies on a rather awkward distinction between violence that inflicts pain and does lasting physical harm, such as hair-tearing, and violence that does relatively temporary and emotional harm, such as hair-disarranging. Propertius, in 2.5, latches onto the fineness of this distinction, and manipulates it to suit his own ends. His promise to Cynthia at 2.5.21-6 that, though he is incensed with her, he will not tear her clothes, break down her door, pull her hair, or grab her roughly,<sup>47</sup> since these are the actions of a boor and not of a cultivated poet, has (I think, rightly) been seen as a response to Tibullus's sentiments in 1.10, and, by extension, a critique of his poetic technique.<sup>48</sup> By rejecting all the acts of violence that Tibullus mentions in 1.10, and

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<sup>46</sup> Gaiser (1983: 70-2) suggests that, since it is only the intrusion of Amor that allows violence to invade the rural scene, this reflects not on the rural life, but on that of the lover. The strong contrast between the farmer and the lover in the lines that follow, though, argue against this interpretation. Note also that, though Amor is present, he sits *lentus* between the quarrelling couple (1.10.58): a word that, in amatory contexts, is distinctly negative (compare Tib. 1.3.82; 1.4.81; 2.6.36). In other words, the farmer enjoys a form of *amor* passionate enough to heat up a quarrel, but not elegiac enough to keep an amorous *rixa* from turning into a proper battle.

<sup>47</sup> This is what must be meant by 'bruising her with his thumbs'; see Heyworth 2007: 133.

<sup>48</sup> See Solmsen 1961: 273-6; Lyne 1998: 533-5; Tzounakas 2006: 120.

suggesting that no true lover-poet would stoop to them (*rusticus haec aliquis tam turpia proelia quaerat, / cuius non hederæ circuire caput*, 2.5.25-6), Propertius implies that, in endorsing them, Tibullus has proven himself uncultivated. This criticism is not quite fair: it is the farmer who breaks down doors and strikes his wife; Tibullus condones only two of the acts that Propertius lists, and, as we have seen, prefers non-violence to either of them. The way in which Propertius alternates between deeds done by the farmer and put forward as alternatives by Tibullus, though, putting all the actions on the same level, helps both to equate Tibullus with his rustic and to hide the unfairness of the criticism. Another way in which Propertius achieves these goals relates, again, to the specific language employed to describe hair-pulling. Firstly, he uses the word *crines* (2.5.23), and thus does not specifically echo either Tibullus's farmer's wife's *capilli* or his *puella's coma*, leaving open the question of which he is alluding to. More importantly, where Tibullus contrasted *scindo* with *dissoluo*, Propertius finds the middle-ground with *carpo* (*nec tibi conexos iratus carpere crines*, 2.5.23). Falling between tearing and disarranging, and thus amalgamating the two acts described by Tibullus into one, this pulling or plucking word exaggerates the severity of the action that Tibullus finds acceptable. It also carries agricultural connotations,<sup>49</sup> which, in context, reinforce the rustic boorishness of the man who performs the action. Thus, Propertius rewrites Tibullus in such a way as to present him as unworthy both as a lover and a poet, implying that his endorsement of violence towards his mistress is an equivocation, and a transgression of the boundaries of *seruitium amoris*, and of proper poetic decorum.

Of course, as Solmsen points out (1961: 275), this jab works as well as it does only because the passage can also be read at face value, and makes perfect sense even if one ignores the references to Tibullus. Read in isolation, it portrays the lover as exasperated by his mistress's flagrant infidelity, and choosing to retaliate in words, which are the proper

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<sup>49</sup> OLD, s. u. *carpo*, 1, 3.

weapon of a poet, rather than with boorish physical violence. The verse with which Propertius plans to wreak his revenge (*'Cynthia forma potens; Cynthia uerba leuis'*, 2.5.28) is telling, in that it plays on the relative validity of Cynthia's authority. Her beauty gives her power over Propertius, but her area of weakness is precisely his greatest area of strength: words.<sup>50</sup> The line does rather fall flat, however; it is not tremendously stinging, compared to the usual excesses of Roman invective, and even a genuinely vicious line would risk anti-climax after the build-up that Propertius has given it (*scribam igitur quod non umquam tua delet aetas*, 2.5.27). In short, Propertius seems to have failed to follow his own advice from earlier in the poem, to make the best of one's anger by escaping before love takes over again (2.5.9-14). He has, in 2.5.21-6, related his unwillingness to use violence against Cynthia to his powerful position as poet, but in the end, he can express his anger towards Cynthia effectively neither through violence nor through words, and has relapsed into his usual position of weakness.

All in all, it is clear that there is an awkward fit between the theoretical power dynamic between the elegiac speaker and his beloved, and the reality. He may nominally brand himself her slave, but, as seen in her unwillingness to comply with his requests for physical punishment, she does not reliably accept the role of mistress. Her other failings, as he sees them, result in jealousy and the desire to do violence on the lover's part,<sup>51</sup> but he is prevented from expressing it, by his self-imposed subservient role. The awkwardness of this position manifests itself in the complexity of Tibullus's and Propertius's discussions of violence towards their mistresses, and, in the end, we learn as much about the self-conscious way in which *seruitium amoris* plays out in practice from considering the reasons each gives for not offering violence to his mistress as from considering why he might like to.

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<sup>50</sup> Peiper emends *uerba* to *uerna*; this makes a tidier parallel grammatically, and a harsher insult (see Heyworth 1984: 402; 2007: 134), and may well be correct. If so, Propertius is still pointing out and exaggerating an area of weakness for Cynthia: he is a free citizen, whereas she is (in all likelihood) a freedwoman, or otherwise well below him in actual rank, despite his self-imposed 'slavery' to her.

<sup>51</sup> See James 2003a: 184-97.

#### Part 4: Men Pulling Their Beloveds' Hair in Ovid

What happens, though, when an elegiac lover does offer his mistress violence, rather than only considering or discussing it? To find out, we must turn to *Ov. Am.* 1.7, the only instance of an elegiac lover actually doing serious physical violence to his mistress. In this poem, Ovid describes the course of his emotions after he has grabbed Corinna by the hair and beaten her, leaving her face bruised and her hairstyle in disarray. He expresses remorse throughout, and nowhere explicitly de-emphasises the shameful nature of what he has done: his act was *caedes*, *scelus* (1.7.27; 31, 67); he was driven to it by *furor* (1.7.3); to be capable of it, he must have been *demens*, *barbarus*, *ferreus* (1.7.19; 50); his arms were *temeraria*, and his hands *uesanae* and *sacrilegae* (1.7.3; 4; 28). Not surprisingly, this has led some, most notably Fränkel (1945: 18-21),<sup>52</sup> to take Ovid, both as speaker and poet, at his word. The tendency among more recent critics, however, has been to argue that either the speaker, the poet, or both are being insincere: either that Ovid the character feels genuine shame (whether sustained or sporadic), but Ovid the poet is winking at us from behind him,<sup>53</sup> or even that neither feels real remorse, and the tone is callous, or cruelly tongue-in-cheek.<sup>54</sup> The tone of the poet is complicated by a variety of factors, including the humour that creeps in at various points, but as far as the speaker is concerned, I think it is a mistake to lean too far towards a reading of the poem that makes him sarcastic or unfeeling. Certain passages are problematic, but none undeniably expresses indifference or callousness, and the negation of every expression of shame and regret in the poem is, I believe, unjustified. For the purposes of this analysis, then, I shall take Ovid the character seriously, and assume that he means what he says. As for the poet, two semi-contradictory themes running through the poem help to clarify his purpose, and perhaps his tone as well. The first of these is the idea that, in laying

<sup>52</sup> 'In the abandon of his repentance he penetrates to an unusual depth of feeling' (Fränkel 1945: 18). See also Wilkinson 1955: 50; Luck 1969: 157.

<sup>53</sup> See Parker 1969: 84-7; Tracy 1979; Davis 1980: 415-416; Gössl 1981.

<sup>54</sup> For a callous tone, see Cahoon 1988: 296-7; Fredrick 1997: 184-6, 189; Greene 1999. For a humorously tongue-in-cheek one, see Khan 1966; Stirrup 1973.

violent hands on Corinna, Ovid has been a cruel bully, taking advantage of his superiority over her; the second is the idea that he has committed an unforgivable act of impiety, in pretending to superiority to which he had no right.<sup>55</sup> The coexistence of these two ideas makes sense only in the context of the complexities and ambiguities of *seruitium amoris* examined above. The normal state of elegiac affairs should mean that Corinna is in the position of power. But the speaker's transgression has revealed the fact that this scheme, as it manifests itself in the *Amores*, at least, is not only a fiction (one of the lover-poet's ideals, that reflects only his own perspective, and not his mistress's), but an unstable fiction, in that it can be transgressed by the lover-persona if he forgets himself. The poet, as we shall see, is more concerned with examining the nature of that fiction and how it operates than pondering the acceptability of his speaker's actions in themselves; the same could, of course, be said for Tibullus and Propertius, but in Ovid's case the process is more self-referential.

A survey of the course of the poem will show the double nature of the speaker's remorse in action, and allow more specific analysis of how hair-pulling and its implications contribute to it. As 1.7 opens, Ovid first expresses self-loathing and shame at his own violence (which is for now described only in general terms), asking for his hands to be chained, and comparing his act to the worst filial or religious impiety (1.7.1-6). To Cahoon (1988: 296) and especially to Greene (1999: 412), the high-flown and exaggerated nature of the terms Ovid uses here makes them inconsistent with the subject matter, and thus insincere, while his violence against Corinna is made to seem insignificant by contrast. But what, then, are we to make of Propertius's comparisons of his joy at spending the night with Cynthia to that of Agamemnon at the conquest of Troy, and his statement that another such night will make him immortal (2.14.1-10), or of Ovid's own statement that any flames willing to burn Tibullus on his pyre would burn the shrines of the gods (3.9.43-44)? Extravagant terms are

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<sup>55</sup> On Ovid as rebellious slave, see Bocchi 2010.

not necessarily an indicator of insincerity, nor would they, to the contemporary reader, automatically suggest the opposite of what they state. On the contrary, they often suggest the depth of the speaker's feelings, implying that only hyperbolic terms can sufficiently convey their magnitude. As for Ovid's request that his hands be chained (1.7.1), this is, as Bocchi explains (2010: 175-7), the standard way of subduing a violent slave. It is not, then, a simple histrionic expression of guilt, but has further implications about the nature of the speaker's horror at what he has done, characterising it as an act of rebellion by someone with no legitimate claim to authority.

Next come two mythical *exempla*: if insane rage drove Ajax to kill a flock of sheep, and Orestes to offer violence to the Furies (1.7.7-10), why should it not have driven Ovid to pull and disarrange his mistress's hair? Khan, arguing for a humorous reading, considers Ovid's tone here to be one of 'smugness and even of satisfaction at finding himself in such renowned company' (1966: 882). Greene sees 'equivocation and inconsistency' in the juxtaposition of Ovid's admissions of guilt with these *exempla* comparing him to mythical heroes, arguing that the comparisons 'minimize his responsibility' and trivialise his violence (1999: 412-13).<sup>56</sup> A close look at the individual implications of the two *exempla*, though, supports a different view of their purpose and effect. The inclusion of Ajax's Homeric epithet, *clipei dominus septemplicis* (1.7.7), emphasises the humiliating unsuitability of a flock of sheep as opponents to him. The description of Orestes, meanwhile, emphasises the negative aspect of his murder of Clytemnestra (*malus ultor*, 1.7.9) and the sacrilegious nature of his offering violence to the Furies (*ausus in arcanas poscere tela deas*, 1.7.10). If Ovid is both an Ajax and an Orestes, then he has, in attacking Corinna, both done unnecessary and unworthy violence to his physical inferior, and committed an impiety in daring to assault his 'goddess'. The *exempla* serve not to justify or excuse Ovid's actions, but to reiterate one

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<sup>56</sup> See also Gössl 1981: 166-8.

aspect of his feelings of guilt (his feelings of impiety), while introducing the other (his sense that he has been a bully). They also introduce epic and tragedy into mix, and thus hint at the generic inappropriateness of the speaker's actions:<sup>57</sup> his behaviour has been better suited to the grim and violent genres with which Ajax and Orestes are associated than to elegy, which is often placed in direct contrast with these genres.<sup>58</sup> Yardley argues (1980: 265; 1980b: 140-1) that both specific verbal cues and the general scenario in *Am.* 1.7 also evoke Menander's *Perikeiromene*, in which a soldier, Polemon, forcibly shears off the hair of his concubine, Glykera; this would add another genre to the mix, reinforcing the idea that Ovid has stepped outside the usual bounds of elegiac convention.<sup>59</sup>

Following the references to Ajax and Orestes, we are finally given more specific details about what Ovid has done: he has 'mangled' Corinna's hairstyle (*ergo ego digestos potui laniare capillos?* 1.7.11). Like *scindere* at Tib. 1.10.53, *laniare* is applied to hair more usually in the context of mourners' hair-tearing.<sup>60</sup> This suggests the speaker's perception of the brutality of his own violence, as well as granting a funeral tone. Note also the emphasis on the orderliness of Corinna's hairstyle (*digestos*), which Ovid has ruined: the contrast between that order and the madness of Ovid's violence, and the suggestion that his guilt is deepened by the thought that he has ruined something beautiful, only emphasise the brutality suggested by *laniare*. If we compare the similar emphasis on the disorder imposed by violence on styled hair at Prop. 2.5.23 (*nec tibi conexos iratus carpere crines*), and consider the transgression of the boundaries of genre suggested both by that passage and by the *exempla* of Ajax and Orestes that have preceded *Am.* 1.7.11, an implied parallel between

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<sup>57</sup> See Morrison 1992: 572-7; he also notes that mention of a *septemplex clipeus* recalls *Aen.* 12.925, reinforcing the epic element.

<sup>58</sup> See above, n.5.

<sup>59</sup> It would also add to the speaker's confusion as to how to atone for his transgression. As Konstan (1987) and May (2005) explain, the fact that the resolution of the *Perikeiromene* is achieved through Polemon and Glykera's marriage is central to the development of the play's themes; no such comedy-appropriate solution is available to Ovid's speaker.

<sup>60</sup> See for example Verg. *Aen.* 12.605-6; Ov. *Am.* 3.9.52; *Her.* 12.157, 14.51; *Met.* 5.472, 6.531; Lucan, *Bell. Ciu.* 2.39, 335. The only other examples I can find of *laniare* referring to the tearing of others' hair are at Ov. *Am.* 2.5.45 (on which see below, pg. 123-4) and *Ars* 2.451 (on which see above, pg. 103-4).

violence done to delicate hairstyles and violence done to delicate verse suggests itself. Though *Am.* 1.7.11 does not verbally echo either Tib. 1.10.53-68 or Prop. 2.5.21-6, it recalls both passages, and the sentiments they express about the incompatibility of such violence with the values of the lover-poet. The question of whether we are to imagine that the speaker has genuinely been as brutal as he thinks he has, or whether, as at the beginning of the poem, he is using exaggerated terms to suggest the depth of his feelings, and has only disarranged Corinna's hair after all,<sup>61</sup> is unanswerable, and essentially unimportant: the important thing is that, faced with the hierarchies set up by either of his predecessors, the speaker would clearly place himself in the category of the violent rustic, rather than that of the ideal, restrained lover-poet.

The idea that he has ruined Corinna's orderly coiffure leads Ovid into contemplation of her beauty even in a state of bruised dishevelment, with reference to similarly dishevelled mythical heroines (1.7.11-18): Atalanta, her hair flying loose because she is out hunting; Ariadne, weeping as Theseus abandons her on Naxos; and finally Cassandra, prostrate at the shrine of Minerva. Khan suggests that the list is a 'relaxed digression' that undercuts the sentiment preceding it (1966: 883-5), while Stirrup considers the elevation of Corinna to a status equal to that of mythical heroines on the basis of her dishevelment to be a 'joke' (1973: 825-7).<sup>62</sup> The comparisons are admittedly on the extravagant side, but this is not unusual for elegy, and the clear escalation in pathos as they proceed argues against either an entirely light-hearted tone, or, for that matter, one of emotionally unengaged visual appreciation. In the first *exemplum*, the only ground for comparison is a visual one: Atalanta's hair, like Corinna's, is attractively dishevelled. Atalanta, though, is no victim, nor is her situation in this scene a sad one. In the second comparison, Ovid focuses on a different aspect of Corinna's appearance, and one that suggests a closer thematic link: she is weeping at her

<sup>61</sup> For the idea that Ovid has not been all that violent, and that the whole episode is no more than a show of histrionics on both sides, see for example Connor 1974: 20, 23; McKeown 1989:164.

<sup>62</sup> See also Kennedy 1993: 56.

betrayal, like Ariadne. In the third, the situation described is the most pathetic of the three: the scene alluded to is that in which Pyrrhus drags Cassandra from the shrine of Minerva and rapes her. Some critics charge Ovid with callousness and perversity here; Cahoon, for example, finds the *exempla* ‘grotesque’, ‘heartless’, and ‘ominous, all the more so because the lover fails to notice how ominous they are’ (1988: 296; 297; 296 n.14).<sup>63</sup> It is of course possible to see how the comparison of Corinna’s beauty to that of three heroines in increasingly pathetic situations, the second weeping at her abandonment by her lover and the third a rape victim, could indeed be seen as disturbingly sadistic. The very next line, though – *quis mihi non ‘demens’, quis non mihi ‘barbare’ dixit?* (1.7.20) – surely argues against the idea that the speaker is relishing that aspect of the feelings the situation has prompted in him, without a trace of remorse. The sudden and strongly expressed return to his own guilt that follows the *exempla* would be extremely jarring if we were not to take it as having been inspired directly by the preceding descriptions. This being the case, the simplest interpretation of the *exempla* – and the one that gives Ovid the poet the most credit for subtlety of technique – is that the progression in them reflects the subtext of the course of Ovid’s thoughts, and that by the end, he does indeed ‘notice how ominous [the *exempla*] are’. He starts by contemplating only Corinna’s beauty, which prompts the comparison to the dishevelled but carefree Atalanta; the tears that accompany Corinna’s dishevelment lead him to think instead of Ariadne;<sup>64</sup> and as the implications of cruel abandonment inherent in Ariadne’s story occur to him, he is made to think of how cruel he has been to his mistress, which leads him to Cassandra’s even sorrier plight. Cassandra’s hair is bound in fillets,<sup>65</sup> and this allusion to her role as priestess, in combination with the mention of the shrine of

<sup>63</sup> See also Greene 1999: 413-14.

<sup>64</sup> Ariadne’s hair is not mentioned directly, but dishevelment is such a consistent feature of the depiction of her abandonment that Ovid does not need to spell it out here. See above, pg. 25 n.33.

<sup>65</sup> See Yardley (1980: 265-6), who cites parallel passages to explain that the presence of *uittae* is not inconsistent with dishevelment (as many allege: Connor 1974: 20; Davis 1980: 415-16; Morrison 1992: 581-3; Davisson 1993: 217). See also Gössl 1981: 169 n.5. For Cassandra’s loose hair, see *Ov. Am.* 1.9.37-8; *Her.* 5.114; *Met.* 13.410; Verg. *Aen.* 2.403-4.

Minerva, and the strong implications of impiety inherent in the scene, again suggest Ovid's own sense that he has outraged his 'goddess'. Once again, the idea that he has taken unfair advantage of his power, implied by the Ariadne scene, is followed immediately by the idea that he has overstepped the mark by profaning what ought to be the object of his reverence. It is at this point that the emphatic rhetorical question bursts out – a believable shift, if we imagine that the speaker here not only comes to recognise his own cruelty, but sees and acknowledges the sadistic edge to his visual appreciation of its results. Ovid is, then, momentarily distracted by Corinna's beauty at line 12, but the lines that follow represent not an undifferentiated and self-congratulatory contemplation of her helplessness, but a gradual, carefully modulated, and psychologically plausible return to his own twofold feelings of guilt, which are not so much overridden as intensified by the thought of her beauty in her dishevelment.<sup>66</sup> If the power of Corinna's sex appeal to distract the speaker from his train of thought at this supremely inappropriate moment has its humorous side (and it would be hard to deny that it does), then the humour is on the level of Ovid the poet's handling of his speaker's conflicted feelings, rather than on the level of the narrative itself, and need not suggest that the speaker's confusion and remorse is anything but genuine.

The two themes continue to jostle and overtake one another as the poem proceeds. Ovid contemplates how brutal he has been, and feels shame at the fact that Corinna, terrified into tearful silence, will not even reproach him (1.7.19-26), but then, balancing that with another eight-line sequence, he compares his crime to that of Diomedes, and Corinna to the injured Venus, which brings up the impiety theme again (1.7.27-34). Next, in a return to his shame at bullying his physical inferior, Ovid ironically imagines himself leading his defeated mistress in triumph through the streets (1.7.35-40). The vivid image of the 'captive' Corinna,

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<sup>66</sup> See Gössl 1981: 168-70. For more on the possibilities offered by images of dishevelled 'damsels in distress' in suggesting the perspective of the narrator, see below, pg. 194-8.

her hair loose<sup>67</sup> and her face pale with fear except for her scratched cheeks, leads Ovid into thoughts of how he might better have marked her with love-bites than blows (1.7.41-2).<sup>68</sup> This in turn leads him into thoughts that directly recall Tib. 1.10.53-68: if he had to express his anger somehow, it should have been enough to shout at her, or at most to tear her dress (*Am.* 1.7.43-8). On the pattern of the Tibullan passage, we might expect hair-disarranging to be listed as a third hypothetical alternative. But we are presented instead with the most specific description yet of what Ovid *has* done: *at nunc sustinui raptis a fronte capillis / ferreus ingenuas ungue notare genas* (1.7.49-50). The speaker, it seems, is too haunted by the thought of his actual behaviour to complete the list of preferable alternatives. The use of the word *ferreus*, meanwhile, reinforces the idea, already suggested in line 11, that Ovid has acted like Tibullus's rustic instead of like a properly submissive elegiac lover-poet, recalling as it does Tibullus's *a lapis est ferrumque, suam quicumque puellam / uerberat: e caelo deripit ille deos* (1.10.59-60). Reminiscence of this passage unites the two sources of Ovid's shame, suggesting both the petty brutality of the farmer in 1.10 and the impiety that Tibullus attributes to any lover who acts in the same way.

Appropriately, the impiety theme wins out in the end, as we finally learn the reason for the shift from anger to remorse that occurred just before the time-frame of the poem itself.<sup>69</sup> Corinna's tears, it turns out, were the immediate catalyst (1.7.57-60), but the pathos of her beauty in her physically and emotionally wounded state, of which these tears are a part, was clearly the underlying cause of Ovid's change of heart. This beauty is described by means of five highly evocative images drawn from various aspects of the natural world. The

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<sup>67</sup> On the loose hair of foreign captives (and subject provinces, personified as female figures) in depictions of triumphs, see Santucci 2011: 90-2; compare *Ov. Her.* 9.125.

<sup>68</sup> Hälikkå suggests that the marks of love and of violence are here made equivalent, in that both demonstrate the elegiac lover's power over his mistress (2001: 34; see also Fredrick 1997: 179); note, though, that the women in elegy bite their lovers (in passion or anger) as often or more so than vice versa (see above, n.12). Compare especially Tib. 1.6.13-14: *liuor . . . / quem facit impresso mutua dente Venus*.

<sup>69</sup> The chronology of the poem is subtly conveyed, but, as Parker explains (1969: 86), the first 62 lines 'can only have taken place in some limbo where time has stopped', between the actual events narrated (which are just about over by the time the poem opens) and the address to Corinna that makes up the final six lines.

first simile compares the stunned Corinna's pallor to that of Parian marble (*astitit illa amens albo et sine sanguine uultu, / caeduntur Pariis qualia saxa iugis*, 1.7.51-2). The basic ground for comparison here is colour, and critics have also noted the appropriateness of the word *caeduntur* to the girl's face as well as the stone<sup>70</sup> – but the connotations of Parian marble, paired with the picture of the motionless and white Corinna, also call up images of cult statues, particularly in the context of the recent comparison of Corinna with Venus.<sup>71</sup> Her trembling then reminds Ovid of the swaying of poplars, reeds, and the waves of the ocean (1.7.53-6), evoking the haunts of nymphs. The quick progression of these similes does not allow us to dwell on each individual image for too long, but instead associates Corinna with the beauty of nature as a whole.<sup>72</sup> The final image, of her tears running from her eyes like water from melting snow (1.7.57-8), is wonderfully vivid in itself, and continues the nature motif of the preceding similes. However, it also recalls a similar comparison in the *Odyssey*, describing Penelope's tears (19.204-8);<sup>73</sup> it thus places us again in the realm of epic, but this time in order to dignify Corinna, putting her on a level with Penelope, the long-suffering paragon of virtue. After a lapse into treating Corinna in a way reflecting only the prosaic realities of their relationship, as physically superior man and inferior woman (like Tibullus's farmer and his wife), the speaker is recovering an idealised, elegiac conception of his mistress as something more, and more powerful: a goddess, a natural wonder, a mythic-literary heroine. Critics, pointing to the leisurely beauty of the descriptions, suggest that Ovid's attitude towards Corinna here is one of detachment and mere visual appreciation.<sup>74</sup> The force of the lines that follow, though, makes it difficult to justify limiting the passage in this way. Corinna's tears pain Ovid to such a degree that he describes them as his own blood: *sanguis*

<sup>70</sup> See McKeown 1989: *ad loc.*; Boyd 1997: 127-8.

<sup>71</sup> For Corinna as icon, see Fredrick 1997: 185-6; his emphasis on the erotic aspect of Ovid's contemplation of Corinna to the exclusion of the empathetic is, however, unbalanced. See also McKeown on the religious implications of the phrase *procumbere supplex* in line 61 (1989: *ad loc.*).

<sup>72</sup> See Parker 1969: 85-6.

<sup>73</sup> On this simile and its Homeric connotations, see Boyd 1997: 125, 128.

<sup>74</sup> See Khan 1966: 891; Connor 1974: 25; Barsby 1973: 89; Fredrick 1997: 85-6; Greene 1999: 415-16.

*erant lacrimae, quas dabat illa, meus* (1.7.60).<sup>75</sup> The nature of Corinna's power over him has been suggested through the evocative similes; this image makes clear that that power has been fully re-established. Again, as with the series of mythical *exempla* at lines 11-18, there is an undercurrent of humour running through the passage; the reader knows from the racy, down-to-earth, and contemporary settings and content of the earlier poems in the collection that Corinna is not a goddess, and is certainly no faultless Penelope. But, as before, it is the poet and not the speaker who is being tongue-in-cheek.

It is at this point that we return to the narrative present. Ovid begs Corinna to properly re-order their relationship by attacking his hair and eyes in retaliation (1.7.63-6). His request is, of course, futile, but the particular nature of its futility is significant: Corinna is not aloof or indifferent, like Delia in Tib. 1.6, or Cynthia in Prop. 3.8, but terrified by Ovid's own violence. Ovid's change of heart, and reversion to a proper elegiac role, will not, it seems, be enough to erase all memory of his lapse. His alternative suggestion is equally problematic, and introduces a final twist. He asks Corinna to put her disarranged hair back in order, so as to re-establish at least visual normalcy (*neue mei sceleris tam tristia signa supersint, / pone recompositas in statione comas*, 1.7.67-8). Critics generally feel that the almost casual tone of this line, complete with a characteristically Ovidian pun suggestive of *militia amoris* ('put your hair back in order / re-form your hair's battle-line') brings what has come before it down to its own level: that it somehow deflates the whole poem, or negates all the speaker's expressions of remorse.<sup>76</sup> There is an element of lightness and even humour in the juxtaposition of the epicised imagery that Ovid has been building up throughout the poem and the down-to-earth detail of Corinna's need to rearrange her hairdo, and this does at last

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<sup>75</sup> Khan (1966: 891-2) and Stirrup (1973: 830) take this to mean that Ovid only minds having hurt Corinna because, in weeping, she has shed his blood in retaliation. This is surely not a natural reading, though, and the passage that follows, in which Ovid begs Corinna to retaliate physically, would then make little sense. For interpretations that give full weight to the emotional impact of the line, see Fränkel 1945: 21; Parker 1969: 85; Gössl 1981: 175-6.

<sup>76</sup> See Khan 1966: 893; Stirrup 1973: 831; Lyne 1980: 250-1; Gössl 1981: 177; Cahoon 1988: 297; Greene 1999: 418.

come via the speaker rather than over his head via the poet.<sup>77</sup> But I would suggest that this last-minute shift in tone implies more about what is to come than what has come before. It suggests not that Ovid's speaker has been his usual light-hearted self throughout the poem, but that he has at last returned to that state – not after a detour into mock-remorse, but after, first, the genuine lapse represented by his having beaten Corinna (a lapse of devotion on the part of the lover-persona, and of generic convention on the part of the poet)<sup>78</sup> and second, an exaggerated swing back into elegiac convention in lines 51-66. Note, though, that Corinna's mute and terrified inability to retaliate with violence in the preceding lines, and the frequent reference throughout the poem to more long-lasting traces of Ovid's transgression, such as bruising, make the superficiality of the erasure of the past to be gained by Corinna's fixing her hairstyle (and by Ovid's re-establishing elegiac convention?) more obvious than the speaker might wish to acknowledge.

Ovid's other, much briefer mentions of the pulling of one's mistress's hair work similarly, in that they, too, play with the effects of awareness of generic conventions on the attitude of the speaker, but they do so more with reference to precedents set by Ovid himself than by the other elegists. At *Am.* 2.5.45-8, angered by the sight of Corinna kissing another man, the speaker considers pulling her hair and scratching her face, but does not. The force of her beauty in her repentance, described at length before we even hear of Ovid's intention (2.5.33-44), overpowers that of his indignation:

*sicut erant (et erant culti) laniare capillos  
et fuit in teneras impetus ire genas;  
ut faciem uidi, fortes cecidere lacerti:  
defensa est armis nostra puella suis.* (2.5.45-8)

Here it is not only the treatments of the theme by Propertius or Tibullus that Ovid is nodding

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<sup>77</sup> On the movement from 'fictional' to 'real' and from 'high' to 'low' in this and other poems in the *Amores*, see Parker 1969: 86-7, 93.

<sup>78</sup> The image of Corinna's hair being put back in order, given the symbolic associations between *cultus* and poetic composition already noted in reference to line 11, hints especially at the latter. See Kennedy 1993: 189; Buchan 1995: 72-3, n.47.

to and manipulating, but his own; the situation is essentially a reworking of that in 1.7. Note the use of *laniare* in line 45, which echoes the striking use of the word at 1.7.11 to describe the pulling of someone else's hair in anger, rather than one's own hair in grief. But the power balance that had been temporarily thrown off in 1.7 is here stable, resulting in a lighter tone, and one more typical of the rest of the *Amores*. As if she had learned from her experience in 1.7, Corinna pulls out the defensive tactic that worked so well on that occasion – beautiful sadness – before any violence occurs, and thus outflanks Ovid in the *militia amoris* alluded to in the reference to her 'defending herself with weapons of her own' (2.5.48). She has, one might say, taken his advice at the end of the earlier poem (1.7.68) and put the scattered troops that are her hair back in order. The trouble is, she is now in a position to force Ovid into treaties that are not to his advantage: by the end of the poem, Corinna is back to kissing him and not his rival, but her new skills in this area suggest that someone else has been teaching her a thing or two (2.5.55-62). I do not suggest an actual continuity of narrative between 1.7 and 2.5, but simply that Ovid is taking the situation in 1.7, which relied on the framework of *seruitium amoris*, and taking it in a different direction in 2.5, based on a different topos and a different tone, more in keeping with his speaker's more usual attitude of pragmatic moral ambivalence.

At *Ars* 2.169-72, we find Ovid changing his tune again, this time to suit a yet lighter, essentially parodic context. In this passage, he again directly recalls *Am.* 1.7,<sup>79</sup> in his advice to his male readers to avoid mistreating their mistresses, but puts a self-centred, revisionist spin on the poem, giving Corinna's unwillingness to see him for days after his attack and her spurious claim that he had torn her dress and ought to buy her a new one (details not mentioned in *Am.* 1.7) as his reasons for regretting his violence. Note especially that the key word that had linked *Am.* 2.5 with 1.7, *laniare*, is now used of actions Ovid denies, and is

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<sup>79</sup> On this and other situations from the *Amores* revisited (and revised) in the *Ars*, see Armstrong 2005: 32-5.

applied to Corinna's dress (*nec puto nec sensi tunicam laniasse*, *Ars* 2.171), rather than to her hair, which he now claims only to have disarranged (*me memini*<sup>80</sup> *iratum dominae turbasse capillos*, 2.169). Face-scratching and bruises are omitted completely. Even in presenting his own behaviour as a cautionary example, then, the *praeceptor* saves face by revising events to suggest that he acted just as he wished he could have at the time (*Am.* 1.7.43-8): like Tibullus's ideal lover-poet, and not like his rustic.<sup>81</sup> For the reader of the *Ars* familiar with the *Amores*, the implications of the passage for the reliability of the *praeceptor* (and the validity of his advice) will have been clear enough.

In his approaches to violence against one's mistress, Ovid takes a theme that has been dealt with in a fairly self-conscious way by Tibullus and Propertius – each directly explains what sort of violence is (in)appropriate, and why – and looks at it from new perspectives, playing out various scenarios in which it does not quite work as it is meant to. In *Am.* 1.7, the speaker is conscious of having failed to keep up his role as lover-poet – a role that the speaker of the *Amores* often wears uncomfortably<sup>82</sup> – and confusedly reflects on what has happened as he tries to get back into character. He manages to do so, briefly (and even seems to access more seriousness and depth of emotion than usual), but the final couplet leaves us less than confident in the permanence of this achievement. In *Am.* 2.5, we see the same reluctant elegiac lover, chafing under the terms of his defeat in the *militia amoris*. And in *Ars* 2, the 'older, wiser' *praeceptor* gives practical advice that belies (and rewrites) the emotionally wrought experiences from which he has derived it. By looking at the motif from these unconventional angles, Ovid at the same time reveals and creatively misrepresents the workings of his own and Tibullus's and Propertius's poetic tropes and frameworks, exploring the complexities of *servitium amoris* (among other topoi) and the role violence plays in it by

<sup>80</sup> On Ovid's use of the word *memini* to signal such references to 'past' poetic situations, see Miller 1993.

<sup>81</sup> Consider also *Ars* 3.565-76, in which violence, including hair-pulling (3.570), is dismissively described as a side-effect of the passionate emotions of young lovers (*ista decent pueros aetate et amore calentes*, 3.571).

<sup>82</sup> On the speaker of the *Amores* as annoyed by the suffering and inconveniences embraced by more typical elegiac personas, see Davis 1989: 43-5.

adopting personas that are distinctly not that of the ideal lover-poet, and seeing how they react in the elegiac situations laid out by his predecessors.

## Chapter 3: Hair and Age

### Introduction

Grey or white hair, being one of the more visually striking effects of aging, serves as an obvious symbol for old age, in ancient literature as in modern. Often, it acts as shorthand not only for old age itself, but for its connotations: for the character traits and types of behaviour associated with age by a given culture.<sup>1</sup> The physiological changes that come with age, the greying of the hair included, have not changed since the time period which concerns us, of the late Republic and early Empire;<sup>2</sup> attitudes to these changes, however, as well as cultural practices related to and assumptions about the aged, are more specific to particular times, cultures, and contexts. There were many such attitudes and assumptions current at the period in question, but the most relevant of these to a discussion of elegy are those relating to how age affects (or ought to affect) one's experience of love, sex, and relationships; age and the grey hair that is often used to signify it are, unsurprisingly, mentioned in elegy most often in contexts relating to these experiences. Old age,<sup>3</sup> according both to philosophers and moralists and to popular stereotypes, was meant to be accompanied by a waning of sexual desire (and sexual attractiveness), and by the abandonment of passionate love affairs along with other youthful excesses.<sup>4</sup> Whether this is spun as a positive or a negative change, of course, depends on context. Cicero, for example, writing in the persona of Cato the Elder,

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<sup>1</sup> Consider for example Plaut. *Most.* 1148; Cic. *De Sen.* 18.62; Hor. *Carm.* 1.9.14-17; 3.14.25-6; Sen. *De Breu. Vit.* 7.10; Plut. *Mor.* 789e; *Anth. Pal.* 5.264 (Paulus Silentarius); 5.273 (Agathias Scholasticus); 11.41 (Philodemus). The word *canus* itself demonstrates the close symbolic connection between greying and aging. It is not exactly equivalent to our 'grey'; though also used as a basic colour word, it applies first and foremost to hair-colour (see André 1949: 64-5). It is so specifically associated with the greying of the hair that it can also mean 'old' by association, with no implication as to the colour of an object; *OLD, s. u. canus*, 3. The related Oscan word *casnar* means 'old man'; see Varro, *Ling.* 7.29.

<sup>2</sup> It is unlikely that people even 'aged faster' in antiquity, despite their lower average life expectancy; see Parkin 2003: 22-6.

<sup>3</sup> For discussions of what age the Romans would have pinpointed as the beginning of *senectus*, see Finley 1981: 156-7; Cokayne 2003: 1-2; Parkin 2003: 15-22. As they explain, the question had no clear answer among the Romans themselves, with figures suggested in philosophical, medical, and other texts ranging from 40 to 70. But, as Cameron illustrates (1995: 175-81), the ancients in general seem to have leaned more towards the lower half of this range; one could easily be considered a *senex* at 40 or 45 – in other words, the age by which, for most, grey hairs have begun to appear (see Orentreich & Orentreich 1994: 381-2).

<sup>4</sup> See Finley 1981: 162-3; Bertman 1989: 161-7; Cokayne 2003: 15-16, 115-21; Parkin 2003: 199-202.

describes it as a welcome relief from the distractions that keep one from more serious pursuits,<sup>5</sup> whereas love poets are more liable to lament the loss of the pleasures of youth, or at least to regard it with some wistfulness.<sup>6</sup> In any case, whereas the sexual escapades of the young (young men, that is) were to some degree tolerated, and even expected,<sup>7</sup> enthusiasm for sex continuing into old age – or at least the obvious demonstration thereof – was considered vulgar and inappropriate. Lustful old men, and especially old women, were a common target for comedy, satire, and invective.<sup>8</sup> Old age was not, however, thought of as necessarily loveless: the intense passions of youth were instead ideally to be replaced by the steady, long-term affection and devotion appropriate to older couples, which fostered an ideal state of marital *concordia*.<sup>9</sup>

This general societal approval for a development from passionate sexual love to relatively desexualised devotion as youth cedes to age, and disapproval for the failure to make this transition, is reflected in elegy. All three of the elegists describe elegy as a genre and elegiac love as a lifestyle most appropriate to youth.<sup>10</sup> Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid (when not envisioning premature death for themselves)<sup>11</sup> all, at one point or another, imagine one day moving on to a calling more appropriate to maturity and old age, whether this is serious study, and perhaps the writing of didactic epic (Prop. 3.5.21-48), the writing of panegyric (Prop. 2.10)<sup>12</sup> or drama (Ov. *Am.* 3.1.69-70), or retirement to family life in the

<sup>5</sup> Cic. *De Sen.* 39-49; compare Pl. *Rep.* 1.329c.

<sup>6</sup> See Bertman 1989: 167-9. For examples, see Mimnermus fr.1 (West); Hor. *Carm.* 4.1; *Anth. Pal.* 12.240 (Strato).

<sup>7</sup> See Fear 2005: 14-17.

<sup>8</sup> See Suder 1992: 232-6; Cokayne 2003: 125-30; Parkin 2003: 86-9. On the *senex amator* in comedy, see Duckworth 1952: 245-7; Griffin 1985: 132; and below, n.27. Predatory but repellent older women are a favourite target for humour; see for example Aristoph. *Eccl.* 976-1111; Hor. *Epod.* 8, 12; Mart. 3.93; *Anth. Pal.* 5.28 (Rufinus); 5.271 (Macedonius). On this character type, see Richlin 1984: 69-72; Rosivach 1994: 109-12; Cokayne 2003: 135-6.

<sup>9</sup> Baucis and Philemon are the classic example (Ov. *Met.* 8.611-727, especially 630-37); see also Catull. 61.152-61. Further examples are cited at Cokayne 2003: 121-5, 130-3, 184 n.37; Parkin 2003: 199-202.

<sup>10</sup> On the elegiac lover as disaffected youth, see Fear 2005, especially 17-18.

<sup>11</sup> Prop. 1.6.27-8; 1.17.19-24; 1.19; 2.1.47, 56, 71-8; 2.4.11-14; 2.8.17-18; 2.13.17-58; 2.14.31-2; 2.24.35-8; 2.27.11-12; Tib. 1.1.59-68, 1.3; Ov. *Am.* 1.3.17-18; 1.10.35-8. The frequency of this motif, in its way, further reinforces the connection between elegy and youth.

<sup>12</sup> Prop. 2.10.7-8 (*aetas prima canat Veneres, extrema tumultus: / bella canam quando scripta puella mea est*)

countryside (Tib. 1.10.39-44). Elegiac poetry and elegiac love are described as naturally incompatible with old age (Tib. 1.1.71-4; Prop. 2.30.13-18; 3.5.21-6; Ov. *Am.* 1.9.4). Old men, in contrast to the still young and attractive speaker, are depicted as physically undesirable, and the idea of them acting like young lovers as either ridiculous or repellent, from the perspective both of the old men's objects of affection, and of third party observers (Tib. 1.2.89-96; 1.8.29-30; 1.9.74; Ov. *Am.* 1.13.35-42). For women, meanwhile, old age is equally incompatible with sexual attractiveness, and the threat of future loss of desirability is used as a vindictive taunt, and/or as an encouragement to be more accommodating before it's too late (Tib. 1.8.41-6; Prop. 3.25.11-18; 4.5.59-62; Ov. *Am.* 1.8.49-54; *Ars* 3.59-82). At the same time, though, Tibullus and Propertius, at least, depict others' long and happy marriages, lasting until both partners have gone grey, as a cosy and enviable ideal (Tib. 1.10.39-44; 2.2.17-20; Prop. 2.16.21-2). Both poets also imagine their relationships with their mistresses as ideally lasting into grey-haired old age (Tib. 1.6.85-6; Prop. 1.8.45-6). If elegy is such a youthful genre, and elegiac love a youthful phenomenon, what are we to make of these idealisations of and hopes for love in old age, particularly when viewed alongside passages that suggest that elegiac love as we know it cannot continue into old age without becoming ridiculous or pathetic? I would argue that, in much the same way as *cultus* or violent hair-pulling do, old age and the concepts associated with it provide the elegists (or Propertius and Tibullus, at least),<sup>13</sup> with an opportunity to examine the complexities of their genre and of the attitudes to love that they present in it, by looking at the same picture – in this case, that of the grey-haired lover or grey-haired couple – from different perspectives. Their personas and their mistresses are young, and the kind of passionate, sexual love that fuels both their relationships and their poetry is associated with the young. Hence, in part, their disdain for

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implies that Propertius's poetic old age is imminent; as no such shift in content occurs, though, this is best seen as a teasing rather than a serious suggestion; see below, pg. 161-2.

<sup>13</sup> Ovid approaches the theme differently; see below, pg. 171-81.

elderly people trying to fill the role of lover or mistress.<sup>14</sup> But elegiac love also incorporates aspects ordinarily associated with older married couples, rather than with youthful love affairs: a strong emotional bond, and complete devotion, to the exclusion of others. Hence their admiration for and desire to emulate such couples. In other words, here as elsewhere, the elegists want it both ways: they want their mistresses to feel towards them as a young lover and an old one should, simultaneously; they want to act as if death, or at least the death of the capacity for their brand of love, is right around the corner, and yet to go on in the same vein well into their old age. To build up this anti-traditionalist conception of love, they need to tap into and manipulate different mainstream ideas at different times, and ignore or suppress the contradictory nature (in traditional terms) of championing both youthful abandon and mature devotion. For Propertius in particular, the image of grey hair, as a symbol of longevity in general, also suggests the contrast between physical mortality and poetic immortality – a concept that he examines in tandem with these ideas about the nature of elegiac love.

Grey hair is a particularly appropriate choice of image for conveying such varied and sometimes contradictory ideas about old age. Many of the other stereotypical signs and symptoms of age, such as baldness, toothlessness, coldness, a bent posture and slowed gait, or trembling, are associated only with negative pictures of aging, and ignored in more positive contexts, since they are considered purely negative in themselves.<sup>15</sup> Grey hair, though, can have either positive or negative connotations, depending on context. It can suggest dignity and respectability:<sup>16</sup> traits which, in a couple, manifest themselves as stability, fidelity, and *concordia*. Or, it can be a sign of the loss of sex appeal, both because it is seen

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<sup>14</sup> As Mader points out (2003: 121-2), older male lovers are doubly unelegiac, as they are generally rich as well as old. Where such men are rivals to a young lover, the unattractiveness of old age can be cited in an attempt to negate the attractiveness of wealth (Tib. 1.8.29-30; 1.9.74).

<sup>15</sup> See Parkin 2003: 81-4; Cokayne 2003: 14-15.

<sup>16</sup> See Cokayne 2003: 18-29 on the seriousness and respectability suggested by grey hair and a wrinkled face, and the reflection of these associations in veristic portraiture; see also Parkin 2003: 105-6. At Prop. 4.9.51-2, the grey hair of the priestess of the Bona Dea helps to establish her general dignity and *grauitas*.

as diminishing one's beauty in itself (hair being a major locus for the physical attractiveness of both sexes),<sup>17</sup> and because, as an early and easily visible sign of age, it is a harbinger of the other physical changes to come.<sup>18</sup> Context determines whether grey hair's positive or negative connotations (or both) are engaged in a given passage. The image of grey hair gains further versatility from the fact that many of its connotations are associated with it indirectly, via the intermediate stage of its general association with age. Take trembling as a counterexample; it is mentioned as a symptom of age at Tib. 1.2.91 and 1.6.78, and in both cases stands in for the physical weakness and more abstract powerlessness that comes with old age. Trembling, as a physical sign, and powerlessness, as the more abstract connotation that it suggests, are directly connected, in that physical weakness is the actual cause of trembling. Greying has no such one-step link with the dignity of conduct that it can connote; grey hair does not physically cause dignified behaviour, any more than dignified behaviour causes grey hair. The positive or negative tone of an image of grey-haired lovers, then, comes not from their grey hair itself, but entirely from their conduct. If their conduct is youthful and undignified, their grey hair makes their behaviour ridiculous or unseemly; if, however, their conduct is consistent with a picture of stable, marital-style devotion, then their grey hair only reinforces the positive implications of their behaviour. Because of its wide field of possible connotations, and the various ways in which these can be manipulated, though various other signs and symbols of age do appear in elegy, grey hair is the most frequent, and appears in the greatest variety of contexts. An examination of each instance will show how each poet makes the passages in which it appears work together and play off one another to create a complex interplay between societal ideas about aging and his own conception of love and love poetry.

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<sup>17</sup> See Sassi 2011: 2, 5-7.

<sup>18</sup> See *Anth. Pal.* 5.21.3, 5.76, 5.103 (Rufinus); 5.23.6 (Callimachus). On grey hair as the earliest visible sign of *senectus*, see Cokayne 2003: 1-2.

### Part 1: Age and Grey Hair in Tibullus

Tibullus's first mention of love in old age comes early, towards the end of the first elegy of book one; the poem lays out several of the themes which are to be important for the book as a whole<sup>19</sup> (and, for that matter, are to be revisited in book two), and love and age is one such theme. As we shall see, it recurs several times at key points in the book (1.2.87-96; 1.6.77-84; 1.8.29-30, 41-6; 1.10.39-44), and makes an appearance in book two as well (2.2.17-20). Tibullus examines the theme from a variety of angles, and uses it to suggest various aspects of elegiac love, as he experiences it and as he envisions it.

Having devoted the greater part of 1.1 to the idea of his contentment with a simple, rural life over a profitable military one, and (at line 53) turned to the subject of love, Tibullus wishes that he and Delia might be together at his death, and imagines how she and all the young men and women present will weep and mourn at his funeral (1.1.59-68). It is important to note that, though at line 61 there is a shift from the subjunctive into the future indicative, the scene as a whole is still a fantasy wish-fulfilment.<sup>20</sup> Tibullus and Delia's relationship is not the stable and cosy idyll conjured by his earlier vision of their sleeping peacefully in a farmhouse together (1.1.43-8), but the more unreliable, and indeed urban,<sup>21</sup> relationship between elegiac *domina* and *seruus amoris* familiar from Propertius, as the brief description at 1.1.55-6 (*me retinent uinctum formosae uincla puellae, / et sedeo duras ianitor ante fores*) makes clear. The first image, of Tibullus being bound to Delia by chains, suggests mutual affection;<sup>22</sup> the second image, though – appropriately relegated to the 'weaker' pentameter – describes him specifically as the *ianitor* chained to her front step. This image suggests that of the locked-out lover, and, by association, all the difficulties and rivalries

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<sup>19</sup> For a list, see below, n.26.

<sup>20</sup> On the vividness and 'reality' of fantasy scenes in Tibullus, see Lee 2008.

<sup>21</sup> On the contrast between Tibullus's rural fantasy and Delia's urban reality, see Lee 1974: 103-4; Gaisser 1983: 61-2; Lyne 1998: 524-5.

<sup>22</sup> Compare Tib. 2.2.17-18 (on which, see below, pg. 149-50) and Prop. 2.29.6, in which Amor and Cupids, respectively, brandish chains; see also Prop. 2.15.25-8, 3.15.9-10, for love's 'chains'.

standing in the way of the union that the first half of the image implies. The tone of the lines that follow, as the prospect of death allows a transition to the possibilities presented by life (*interea, dum fata sinunt, iungamus amores: / iam ueniet tenebris Mors adoperta caput*, 1.1.69-70), is thus persuasive rather than celebratory: confident as Tibullus may be that his death would prompt Delia to show the true depth of her affection for him (1.1.63-4), he would naturally be happier if that were not what it took.

The thought of death as a spur to love is a standard motif in most genres of love poetry,<sup>23</sup> and elegy is no exception; consider Prop. 1.19, especially lines 25-6 (*quare, dum licet, inter nos laetemur amantes: / non satis est ullo tempore longus amor*), or 2.15.49-54. Tibullus goes on to explain, though, that yet further urgency is required – that *dum fata sinunt* implies not only ‘while we are still alive’, but ‘while we are still young’:

*iam subrepet iners aetas, nec amare decebit,  
dicere nec cano blanditias capite.  
nunc leuis est tractanda Venus, dum frangere postes  
non pudet et rixas inseruisse iuuat.* (1.1.71-4)

Even if it should turn out that death is not imminent, the death of youthful love is.<sup>24</sup> One could argue that this sits uncomfortably with Tibullus’s suggestion in lines 59-68 that his love for Delia will last until his death and beyond, with humorous effect – that he is revising the sentiment ‘I will love you until I die’ to read ‘I will love you until I die, or until we grow old, whichever comes first’. This is essentially how Lyne sees the passage (1998: 530-2), arguing that it is intentionally inconsistent: an ‘unpredictable intrusion of Ciceronian or Horatian ethics’ into an elegiac environment, calculated to ‘score points’ off Propertius and his proclamations of eternal love, at 1.19.25-6 and elsewhere. Though I agree that Tibullus is in part alluding to and putting an original twist on the situation and sentiments of Prop. 1.19 in

<sup>23</sup> For only the most famous examples from Latin lyric, see Catull. 5; Hor. *Carm.* 1.9; 1.11.

<sup>24</sup> Compare Mimnermus, fr. 2.5-7 (West), which describes early death and an unpleasant old age as the only two prospects that the young have to look forward to.

this passage,<sup>25</sup> I find it unlikely that, in the first poem of the collection, and one that establishes the foundations of many of the concepts that he is to revisit later in the book,<sup>26</sup> Tibullus should choose to parody the classic lover-persona quite so directly, considering the fact that this is essentially the character that he is himself to adopt from this point on. More probably, reality is here starting to intrude: Tibullus's rural ideal may be an unfulfillable fantasy, and his vision of what his death and funeral will be like may be on the optimistic side, but getting Delia into bed in the meantime – that is, getting her to reciprocate at least the youthful, passionate aspect of his love for her – is at least an achievable goal. And since this is the more time-sensitive of his goals, it makes sense for Tibullus to use not just the spectre of death, but also that of old age to further it.

The introduction of old age also alters the reasons for the speaker's urgency. It will not make the activities listed in lines 71-4 impossible, as death would, but it will make them too embarrassing: acting like a lover and devising flatteries is no longer seemly once one's hair is white (*nec amare decebit, / dicere nec cano blanditias capite*, 1.1.71-2). This is in part because of the incongruity between the expected *grauitas* of the elderly and the *leuitas* of the young, but also, more specifically, between an aged appearance and sexual desire, a juxtaposition which the speaker clearly considers distasteful.<sup>27</sup> Youth is the proper time for beating on doors and having rows (1.1.73-4), because it is the only time when one is shameless enough to do these things without being prevented by embarrassment (*non pudet*), and even to enjoy them (*iuuat*). The ideas evoked by 1.1.71-2 remain 'live' through this next couplet: shamelessness is acceptable in youth because the young do not have to live up to the propriety of conduct demanded by grey hair, but they have less cause to feel shame in any

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<sup>25</sup> See below, pg. 212-13.

<sup>26</sup> These include, but are not limited to, yearning for an idealised rural life (revisited at 1.2.71-4; 1.5.19-36; 1.10), the rejection of war and wealth (revisited at 1.2.65-70, 75-6; 1.10), *seruitium amoris* (revisited at 1.2.89-90; 1.6.37-8, 69-72) and, of course, love and age.

<sup>27</sup> This same pair of contrasts underpins the type of the *senex amator* in comedy; compare Plaut. *Asin.* 862-3; *Cas.* 239-42; *Merc.* 291, 303-25.

case, since the idea that their actions are motivated by lust is not as automatically off-putting. It is interesting to note that the focus is entirely on how things will look for Tibullus himself, rather than how they will look for Delia. It is the lover who speaks flatteries, beats on doors, and enjoys quarrels,<sup>28</sup> and who is the one who will look ridiculous if he attempts to continue to do so when grey-haired. This is partly a matter of diplomacy. The message ('return my affections while you still can') is similar to that of other, more direct threats of imminent old age as encouragements to love, in which greying hair is a common image.<sup>29</sup> Here, Tibullus gets that message across without direct threat or insult, by suggesting that he will one day have to stop wooing Delia so enthusiastically only because of the limitations imposed by his own old age, rather than because she will no longer be beautiful enough to inspire such violent passions. However, specific focus on the old age of the lover himself also suggests that the sense of urgency that Tibullus is trying to communicate to Delia is not simply a persuasive tool, but born of the speaker's own understanding of the limited longevity of their relationship as it currently stands.<sup>30</sup>

Similar ideas are dealt with towards the end of Tibullus's next poem (1.2.87-96), through similar imagery, but in a different context, and at greater length. The poem as a whole is the longest in book one, at almost a hundred lines, and follows the speaker's train of thought in a fluid manner, switching between addressees often; these and other features have caused uncertainty and debate on the subject of the poem's intended setting, and on whether we are to imagine that the speaker has an audience (of friends, or of passersby) within the narrative, or that he is soliloquising.<sup>31</sup> The ambiguity on these points is probably

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<sup>28</sup> On the appeal of violent rows, see above, pg. 102-5.

<sup>29</sup> See below, pg. 140-5.

<sup>30</sup> As it turns out, of course, it will not last much further than halfway through the book; see below, pg. 142-5.

<sup>31</sup> Vretska (1955) summarises earlier views, and suggests that Tibullus is soliloquising at home; Lyne agrees (1980: 179-81). Smith (1913: 45-6), Solmsen (1962: 87, n.55), and Williams (1968: 499) argue that he is at a banquet; Cairns (1979: 166-7) and Murgatroyd (1980: 71-2) that he is on Delia's doorstep.

intentional,<sup>32</sup> but in any case I think it is important to retain the sense, suggested by the doorstep imagery near the beginning of the poem (1.2.5-14), of the ‘man in the street’ as witness to Tibullus’s outpourings in 1.2 – a representative, as Khan puts it (1979: 283, n.15), of ‘orthodox Roman views unappreciative of romantic love’. There is a focus throughout the poem on the security to be found in secrecy, and the linked fantasies of invisibility and invincibility in the presence of strangers and other outside threats. At one point, these themes dominate the poem for forty lines straight: Tibullus assures Delia that Venus will help her to sneak out of her house (1.2.15-24), and grant him safety from ambush in the streets (1.2.25-30); he tells passersby that Venus would prefer that they ignore him and Delia (1.2.31-40); he explains that he has engaged a witch to magically ensure this secrecy (1.2.41-58). A sense of the public nature of his current plight – even if ‘public’ only because published, and ‘witnessed’ by the reader – gives extra edge to this motif, both through this sequence, and, even more so, in the final part of the poem, which concerns us here.

Throughout 1.2, Tibullus makes a spectacle of himself, performing or imagining himself performing various actions that are expected of the elegiac lover, but that are on the undignified side for a self-respecting citizen, including pleading with and leaving garlands on Delia’s locked door (1.2.7-14), asking a witch for magical aid (1.2.41-64), and abasing himself at the shrine of Venus (1.2.79-86). This last fantasy, the most humiliating in physical terms, is conjured up in vivid detail: should it be necessary, he will kneel, kiss the threshold, crawl like a suppliant, and even beat his head against the doorposts. The description is apparently the last straw for an unidentified listener (or an imagined reader), who responds with derision between lines 86 and 87, as Tibullus now addresses the mocker directly: beware making fun of lovers, because you might be next (1.2.87-8). He then elaborates, describing how bad such a reversal can be:

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<sup>32</sup> See Yardley 1978: 28-9; Miller 1999: 187-90.

*uidi ego qui iuuenum miseros lusisset amores  
 post Veneris uinclis subdere colla senem  
 et sibi blanditias tremula componere uoce  
 et manibus canas fingere uelle comas:  
 stare nec ante fores puduit caraeue puellae  
 ancillam medio detinuisse foro.  
 hunc puer, hunc iuuenis turba circumterit arta,  
 despuit in molles et sibi quisque sinus. (1.2.89-96)*

As at 1.1.71-4, Tibullus stresses the contrast between the actions of young lovers and the signs of old age, which ought to be accompanied by more dignified behaviour. Coming up with pretty flatteries (1.2.91) – the same *blanditiae* mentioned at 1.1.72, but here, with *componere*, suggesting love poems more specifically – may be a rather unmanly thing to do even for the young, from the mocker’s perspective, but to sing them in the weak voice of an old man becomes pathetic. As in the previous poem, though, grey hair provides the clearest visual representation of the incongruities that make the old man’s behaviour ridiculous. The image is made more evocative here by the fact that he does not simply act young despite his grey hair, but tries to do so with respect to his hair itself, by styling it (*manibus canas fingere uelle comas*, 1.2.92). For men, paying any serious attention to the styling of one’s hair was already associated with effeminacy and disreputability.<sup>33</sup> It is especially ridiculous to do so when the whiteness of one’s hair and the advanced age that it represents will negate the attractiveness to be gained from styling it in the first place. Commentators interpret *uelle* variously: Smith (1913) suggests that it here means ‘willing to’, or ‘ready to’; Murgatroyd (1980), that it means either ‘eager to’, or ‘attempt to’; Putnam (1973), that it suggests complete inability: ‘he is so powerless that this can only be a desire’. There is no need to choose between these shades of meaning, however; they all play off one other to suggest both the desperation and the ultimate futility of the man’s attempt to make himself attractive. If doing one’s own hair (*manibus*, 1.1.92) rather than having it styled by a slave or a professional was considered a sign of particular vanity, as comparable passages suggest

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<sup>33</sup> See above, pg. 82-4.

(Prop. 1.15.5; Ov. *Ars* 3.434), this will only have made the image more pathetically incongruous. The idea of weakness brought in by the *tremula* of the previous line, too, gives the detail more specific force: if he is shaky enough to have a tremulous voice, the elderly lover is probably not too deft either, and is unlikely to be restyling his hair very effectively.<sup>34</sup> Tibullus claims to have seen all of this personally (*uidi ego*, 1.2.89); clearly, either the old man was doing his hair in the street, or the signs of his attempt and failure to do so were obvious to all. Either way, the aged lover's ridiculousness lies not only in the futility of his efforts, but also, and especially, in his own obliviousness to their futility.

His other behaviour – standing before his beloved's door, and talking with her maid in public (1.2.93-4) – is equally shameful for a man who has reached an age when he ought to be respectable. This is partly because it is servile, in keeping with his new role as slave to Venus (1.2.90), but also because, being publicly visible, it makes his lust obvious to all, much as his attempts to style his hair do.<sup>35</sup> The fact that he is not ashamed to act this way (*nec puduit*, 1.2.93) should recall the idea, from the previous poem, that such public and enthusiastic wooing is for the young, precisely because they are not ashamed to go to embarrassing extremes for love (*non pudet*, 1.1.74), and, still being attractive enough to succeed eventually, they have less reason to be. To abase oneself publicly in this way in youth, as Tibullus imagines himself doing, may be pathetic, but this can be romanticised; to be so shameless in old age, he suggests, is simply futile and laughable.

More than that, though, such shamelessness is a frightening form of divinely inspired madness. The behaviour of the young onlookers, gathering around and spitting on themselves (1.2.95-6), is that of someone faced with an epileptic or a madman; the cause of seizures and fits being invisible, such afflictions were attributed to the influence of gods or spirits, and superstition suggested that spitting on or near oneself (or on the sufferer) could

<sup>34</sup> On the proverbial weakness and tremulousness of old age, see Parkin 2003: 82.

<sup>35</sup> On the public nature of these excesses as the old man's 'ultimate shame', see Putnam 1973: *ad loc.*

ward them off.<sup>36</sup> As someone behaving bizarrely under the influence of Venus, it is fitting that, to the crowd, the grey-haired lover should fall into the same half-pitiable half-threatening category. Immediately following this description of the crowd's reaction, Tibullus ends the poem with a quick but evocative prayer, in which he asks Venus to spare him, her servant: *at mihi parce, Venus: semper tibi dedita seruit / mens mea: quid messes uris acerba tuas?* (1.1.97-8). The *at mihi* suggests a direct contrast between the old man's fate and the one that Tibullus feels he himself deserves: that Venus is right to punish mockers in this way, but ought to ease up on those who, like him, do her proper and timely honour. He is, of course, in part referring to his present suffering: Delia's inaccessibility and his various attempts to get around it, described through the earlier part of the poem. Coming directly after the description of the pathetic older lover, however, the prayer also suggests more specific urgency and anxiety on Tibullus's part: the fear that, if things should continue as they are, he may yet end up a laughing-stock himself in his old age. Tibullus, then, acts just like the young onlookers he describes, responding to his own picture of the older lover by trying at once to ward off the ill omen, lest he should be similarly afflicted himself.

From the perspective of Tibullus's lover-persona, as expressed in 1.1 and 1.2, the negative side of love in old age is a matter of appearances: the look of the thing is the main factor that makes the same actions acceptable for the young, but shameful for the old. This has in part to do with societal pressure related to the stereotypes described in the introduction to this chapter, and in part to do with the young speaker's more concrete distaste for the thought of the elderly wanting to have sex. Consider for example 1.1.71's *nec amare decebit*, which contains both implications: to love (in the youthful, passionate sense) in old age would be 'wrong/improper', in that society would disapprove of such frivolousness, but also 'unseemly/unattractive', in that the speaker would personally find it off-putting. But both of

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<sup>36</sup> See Murgatroyd 1980 and Maltby 2002, *ad loc.*; for this practice, see Theophr. *Char.* 16; Plaut. *Capt.* 547-55; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* 28.35; Apul. *Apol.* 44. On spitting in Roman superstition, see Nicolson 1897, especially 30-7.

these reactions are rooted in the visual incongruity of the scene. The use of grey hair as the symbol of old age in each passage supports this focus on the visual, in that it is a purely cosmetic symptom of aging. Having grey hair does not make it impossible to be a lover *per se*; it simply makes it ridiculous to be seen acting like one. Bodily changes or physical debilities that might have a more immediate effect on one's love life (weakness, coldness, impotence, etc.) are hinted at in the tremulous voice of the old man in 1.2, but are not emphasised or elaborated on in either passage.

A somewhat different view of love in old age is presented later in book one. At 1.8.27-34, Tibullus tries to persuade Pholoe to waive her requests for gifts when it comes to the young Marathus, since sleeping with him will be its own reward, and to keep such requests for her other, white-haired lover, of whom the same cannot be said (*det munera canus amator, / ut foueat molli frigida membra sinu*, 1.8.29-30). Not long after, the speaker turns the same idea back onto Pholoe herself: she had better accept Marathus while she can, because one day, offers this attractive will stop coming in, riches will be cold comfort, and it will be too late for her change in priorities to do her any good:

*non lapis hanc gemmaeque iuuant quae frigore sola  
dormiat et nulli sit cupienda uiro.  
heu sero reuocatur amor seroque iuuentas  
cum uetus inficit cana senecta caput.  
tum studium formae est: coma tum mutatur; ut annos  
dissimulet uiridi cortice tincta nucis:  
tollere tum cura est albos a stirpe capillos  
et faciem dempta pelle referre nouam.  
at tu dum primi floret tibi temporis aetas  
utere: non tardo labitur illa pede. (1.8.39-48)*

The focus here is much less on public humiliation and the opinion of outsiders than it was in 1.1 and 1.2, and more on private shame and frustration. The factors that make it a frightening prospect for Pholoe to have to hide her age by dyeing her hair, plucking her white hairs, and trying to rejuvenate her complexion (1.8.43-6) are rather different from the factors that made the old man's hair-styling at 1.2.92 a cautionary example. He was apparently oblivious to the

unattractiveness that his age brought with it, though this was obvious to Tibullus and other onlookers. Pholoe's actions, on the contrary, will be a response to her own consciousness of her ebbing beauty.<sup>37</sup> Her desperation is emphasised by the inclusion of two separate methods of hiding greying hair: dyeing it (1.8.43-4) and pulling out white hairs (1.8.45). Using both methods at once makes little sense; the message, then, seems to be not only that Pholoe will be so desperate to regain her youthful beauty that she will try anything, but also that her efforts will be in vain, making her try successive methods of hiding the same flaw. The odd phrase describing her attempt to renew her complexion (1.8.46) suggests some kind of harsh exfoliation, meant to be rejuvenating perhaps by analogy with a snake sloughing off its skin.<sup>38</sup> Like the plucking of her grey hairs, this constitutes an attempt at regaining youth by physically removing the signs of age: a more extreme and desperate measure than simply hiding them with dye or make-up.<sup>39</sup> All these actions, however, are to be motivated not by an abstract desire to remain beautiful, but by the more concrete longing for the benefits that her beauty could have brought her in youth, had she not preferred wealth: namely, sexual fulfilment, as is underscored by the image of her cold bed (1.8.39-40). It will of course be cold because empty of a partner, but, especially when paired with a reference to the profits of Pholoe's relationship with her *canus amator*, the image also recalls the idea of the physical coldness of the old, alluded to at 1.8.29-30.<sup>40</sup> It thus reinforces the idea of Pholoe's lost sex appeal (she will soon be the one needing warming up); this is picked up at the end of the couplet (*et nulli sit cupienda uiro*, 1.8.40). As the sad exclamation (*heu*) and the repeated *sero* of line 41 make clear – their tone both an expression of the speaker's (feigned?)

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<sup>37</sup> The passage is also calculated to resonate with Marathus, who, it is implied, is coming to the end of his attractiveness to men, just as Pholoe will one day do. See above, pg. 50-1.

<sup>38</sup> See Smith 1913 and Murgatroyd 1980, *ad loc.*

<sup>39</sup> The image of plucking hairs and attempting to keep the skin of the face looking youthful, as equivalents to measures undertaken to delay the appearance of adulthood in young men, would also resonate more with Marathus than hair-dyeing would.

<sup>40</sup> For increasing physical coldness and dryness as the cause of the symptoms of age in Greek and Roman thinking, see Parkin 2003: 251-2; Cokayne 2003: 34-8.

sympathy, and a prediction of Pholoe's own emotional reaction to the change in her fortunes – her attempts to hide and deny the signs of age and her loss of sex appeal will be in vain. The inevitability of the former ensures the inevitability of the latter; hence the presentation of *amor* and *iuventas* as paired losses, in the same line. Whereas at 1.1.71-2, Tibullus presented youthful love in old age simply as unseemly, he here presents it as impossible. He has less need to be diplomatic than he had in the former passage, and is appealing more directly to fear; but the difference also has to do with the fact that the focus in 1.1 was on the elderly lover, and is here on the elderly mistress. As the presumed success despite physical unattractiveness of Pholoe's own *canus amator* as rival to the still young and sexy Marathus demonstrates (1.8.29-30, 50), the elderly lover can at least buy love, but this is not practicable for the pursued, whose personal attractions are her currency.

As at 1.1.69-74, at 1.8.39-48 Tibullus uses the threat of imminent and inescapable old age, as symbolised by greying hair, as an encouragement to embrace youthful, sexual love. At 1.6.77-86, the same threat is used for a slightly but significantly different persuasive purpose: to encourage long-term mutual devotion. At various points through 1.6, the last of the Delia poems, Tibullus tries various methods of ensuring her continued faithfulness to him when it comes to unfaithfulness to her *uir*. In keeping with the humour inherent in encouraging such selective infidelity, his strategies are presented in a tongue-in-cheek style that is more associated with Ovid.<sup>41</sup> Tibullus tells Delia's *uir* that he would keep a good watch over her currently too laxly guarded virtue (1.6.37-42); he tells her that the terrifying priestess of Bellona has curses ready for her should she stray (1.6.55-6); he asks her aged mother to teach her to be chaste (1.6.57-68);<sup>42</sup> he promises to endure any cruelty at her hands (1.6.69-72);<sup>43</sup> and, finally, he tells her what happens to a faithless woman, when she grows

<sup>41</sup> On the poem's humorous aspects, and its influence on Ovid, see Veremans 1987 and 1991: 376-7, 394.

<sup>42</sup> A humorous inversion of the trope of the *lena* instructing her charge, developed at greatest length in Prop. 4.5 and Ov. *Am.* 1.8. On this type, see Myers 1996.

<sup>43</sup> On this passage, see above, pg. 102-7.

old: she ends up sad and alone, spinning and weaving for hire (1.6.77-80). The publicly humiliating aspects of the loss of sexual appeal in old age (implied at 1.1.71-2 and developed more fully at 1.2.89-96) and its personally disappointing aspects (examined at 1.8.39-46) are united in the description that follows. Much like that of the mocker-turned-lover of 1.2, the faithless woman's punishment is a public one: she is a spectacle for the young, who consider her fate quite justified (1.6.81-2), as does Venus herself (1.6.83-4). Her own private suffering is also stressed, though, both in the image of her poverty (*inops*) and weakness (*tremula*. . . *manu*, 1.6.78) – here not made ridiculous by its context, as at 1.2.91, but retaining its pathos – and of her weeping (*flentem*, 1.6.83), which is contrasted with the youths' Schadenfreude, and Venus's sense of triumph.

The trope of the unfaithful mistress punished by poverty and loneliness in old age is a familiar one, and to this point there is nothing striking about Tibullus's version;<sup>44</sup> the twist comes in the next and final couplet: *haec aliis maledicta cadant: nos, Delia, amoris / exemplum cana simus uterque coma* (1.6.85-6). At 1.1.69-74, Tibullus had invited Delia to choose between continuing to be aloof and choosing to be accommodating by contemplating the idea that, other than early death, the only future the two of them had to look forward to was an old age without passion. Here, he instead invites her to choose from two alternative futures, which are imagined as the direct outcomes of her actions: loneliness in old age, should she continue to be promiscuous, versus togetherness in old age, should she choose to be faithful to him. The image of love in old age as conceived in the final couplet must be a positive one, as its whole purpose is to make the future of those who are faithful in love seem attractive compared to that of the unfaithful. But what, precisely, does it mean for a couple to be an *amoris exemplum* when their hair is white (1.6.85-6)? At 1.1.72 and 1.2.92, the image of lovers' white hair had helped to characterise their behaviour as unseemly and ridiculous,

<sup>44</sup> See Smith 1913: *ad loc.*; he cites *Anth. Pal.* 5.273 (Agathias Scholasticus), 5.298 (Julianus), and 6.283 (anon.); see also Bertman 1989; Clemeau Esler 1989. A variation on the theme comes up again at Tib. 2.4.39-50. On poverty and loneliness in old age in general, see Cokayne 2003: 152, 168-72; Parkin 2003: 212-26.

but that was because of the incongruity between their elderly appearance and their youthful behaviour. If this image, by contrast, is to be a positive one, then one of two things must be happening: either the ridiculous aspect of the image of youthful love in old age remains, but is here used in a light-hearted manner; or, we are to imagine the grey-haired Tibullus and Delia as an *exemplum* of the type of stable but desexualised *concordia* perceived as appropriate to elderly married couples. If we favour the first option, then Tibullus is suggesting that he would like himself and Delia to defy the expected course of a relationship, by continuing to be an *exemplum* of youthful, passionate love well into their old age. Like his fantasy of a jealous Delia pulling him through the streets by the hair a few lines earlier (1.6.71-2), this would be an exaggerated and mildly humorous image. Just as Tibullus would like Delia to be possessive of him beyond all reason and decorum, he would like them to be physically attracted to each other beyond the socially acceptable time limit of such feelings. If we favour the other option, and take the two ideas contained in the image (being an *exemplum amoris* and being white-haired) together rather than separately, Tibullus is instead suggesting that he would like his relationship with Delia to follow the pattern of a stereotypical Roman marriage. In other words, he would like their current, passionate affair to be supported by more emotionally underpinned feelings of devotion, on her side as well as his,<sup>45</sup> which will outlive their youth, and continue into a relatively dignified old age. Our most attractive option, then, is perhaps to allow the flexibility of grey hair as an image to leave both interpretative possibilities open and active at the same time, their near-contradictory nature being a further reflection of the unachievability of either goal in practical terms.<sup>46</sup> Each is unfeasible, given both the presence of Delia's *uir*, and her own evident lack of interest in loving Tibullus exclusively and devotedly, but even if either goal were plausible in itself, he and Delia can scarcely hope both to continue a passionate love affair into old age,

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<sup>45</sup> As Murgatroyd points out (1980: *ad loc.*), *uterque* in line 85 is pointed.

<sup>46</sup> On such double meanings and ironies throughout the poem, see Gaisser 1971.

and, at the same time, to be the *exemplum* of respectable Roman marriage. Leaving both possible interpretations open makes for an appropriately confused and hopeless end to Tibullus's relationship with Delia, which is, after all, not to be revisited or given any more conclusive seal. It ends as it began in 1.1, in pleasant but unfulfillable and self-contradictory fantasy.

Though 1.6 is the last of Tibullus's poems to refer to Delia, it is not the last to refer to the relationship between love and old age. As we have seen, the theme is revisited in 1.8, in the different context and among the different cast of characters of Tibullus's relationship with Marathus, though only via a negative view of grey-haired old age as incompatible with sexual love. The positive association between old age and a stable and mutual love also comes up one last time in book one, at 1.10.39-44. Here grey hair appears in the context of the same longing for the kind of relationship that can last into old age that we saw at 1.6.85-6; this time, though, that idea is not diluted by a half-ironic context. Having spent the first part of the poem decrying the violence of war, and expressing his nostalgia for rural life, Tibullus contrasts early death, which the warlike and greedy foolishly hasten for themselves (1.10.33-8), with the advantages of the long life that peaceful farmers can expect:

*quin potius laudandus hic est quem prole parata  
occupat in parua pigra senecta casa!  
ipse suas sectatur oues, at filius agnos,  
et calidam fesso comparat uxor aquam  
sic ego sim, liceatque caput candescere canis  
temporis et prisci facta referre senem. (1.10.39-44)*

Wishing specifically for old age and the grey hair that represents it is in part a response to the idea that a military life unnecessarily hastens death (1.10.33-4), but Tibullus seems also to be attracted by the trappings associated with the latter phase of life in themselves, and not only because they are preferable to dying young. The idea of children, a peaceful family life, and a devoted wife appeals to him. The statement of a desire for such an arrangement would seem an odd conclusion to a collection in which complete devotion to relationships doomed

to a shorter duration and incompatible with such traditional priorities have been championed, except that the sentiment recalls similar fantasies of rural life that recur through the book. We have seen this already in 1.1. In that poem, though, Tibullus imagined sharing a farmhouse with his *domina* (1.1.45-8), rather than with a wife and children. The closest parallel to the *uxor* of 1.10.42 is the fantasy-Delia of 1.5.21-34, running things on her and Tibullus's imagined estate, and even dandling a child on her knee, but even there it is a slave's child, not their own, and the unlikelihood of the scenario ever being fulfilled is underscored (1.5.20, 35-6). By 1.10, Delia has disappeared, and the idealised image of a stable and cosy relationship in the countryside, extending into grey-haired old age, is not so self-evidently unfeasible. In keeping with this optimistic tone, greying itself is described in pleasant terms; *candescere canis* (1.10.43) suggests not dull grey, but gleaming whiteness. Brightness carries positive connotations;<sup>47</sup> these are here transferred to white hair by the proximity of the two words, which emphasises their similar sound, and implies an etymological connection.

The positive view of aging that Tibullus expresses at 1.10.39-44 is perhaps most telling when considered as a complement to the very different attitude he had expressed in 1.1. Love in old age is a relatively minor theme in the two poems, compared with the contrast between the military life and the rural, or between either of these and the life of the lover – themes that they also share – but it nonetheless contributes to a general encouragement to read the two poems as complementary book-ends, and influences our understanding of these more central themes. Whereas the image of love in old age presented at 1.1.71-2 was of its unseemly and undesirable incarnation alone, and was used as a persuasive tool to encourage youthful, physical love, its nature and purpose in 1.10 is quite the opposite. We see only the positive, stable image of married life, removed from the urban world of Delia back into the countryside. Boyd notes, in reference to 1.1.57ff., that 'in poetic

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<sup>47</sup> On light and dark in Tibullus, see Booth & Maltby 2005.

terms, when Tibullus shifts his attention to Delia he implicitly abandons his farm' (1984: 277). The opposite principle applies too: in the absence of Delia, we find ourselves back on the farm, and fully immersed in the attitudes and priorities that Tibullus associates with it. Echoes of the structure of 1.1 set us up to expect at any time a shift from comparison of the rural life with that of the soldier into a discussion of the life of the lover, as occurs at 1.1.57. But these expectations are defeated (for a while, at least), and each point of comparison displays that the speaker's priorities are not the same here as they had been in 1.1. Just as the description of old age at 1.1.71-2 had been, 1.10.39-44 is preceded by an image of the swift approach of death (1.10.33-38), but this is here depicted as hastened by the pursuit of military glory, and extended into a description of the joyless underworld, rather than romanticised by images of mourning lovers (1.1.61-8). Grey-haired old age, furthermore, is not equated with early death, as it had been in 1.1, since both put a stop to youthful love (1.1.69-72), but is instead set in direct contrast to it. The joys that the underworld will lack are not those of lovers, but those of farmers: *non seges est infra, non uinea culta* (1.10.35). And as for the line that follows Tibullus's hopes for his future at 1.10.43-44, with its shift back into his hopes for the present, this, too, has a rural flavour; instead of *interea, dum fata sinunt, iungamus amores* (1.1.69), we get *interea pax arua colat* (1.10.45).

Because it is not consistent with whispering sweet nothings, and with the 'warfare' of love, Tibullus depicted his future grey hair as something to fear at 1.1.71-2; here he rejects warfare of any kind, and explicitly looks forward to sedentary old age. When the 'wars of Venus' do finally make an appearance, later in the poem, they do so in the form of a physical quarrel between a drunk farmer and his wife (1.10.53-8): a scenario less in keeping with generic convention than the broken doorposts and lovers' *rixae* of 1.1.73-4, and thus more shocking in its violence. Even when more standard, elegiac violence on the lines of 1.1.73-4 is favourably contrasted to this rustic version (1.10.59-64), it is in aid of a message of peace

and moderation (1.10.65-8).<sup>48</sup> In short, when the expected shift from the topic of rural life to the life of the lover finally occurs, it is in support of the poem's general message about the benefits of peace, and does not make an exception for lovers' battles, as 1.1.73-6 had done. In the absence of Delia, Tibullus is no longer the *dux milesque bonus* in his own brand of warfare that he had been at 1.1.75, but comes across practically as a retired veteran. Sedentary old age (compare the *pigra senecta* praised at 1.10.40 to the *iners aetas* feared at 1.1.71), the kind of stable relationship that is appropriate to it, and the grey hair that is the visual representation of both, are thus appropriate desires, as, in the context of the poem as a whole, the passionate behaviour that was described as an ill fit with all three at 1.1.71-4 is just another kind of violence. There is no clearly developed narrative running through book one, but the structural and thematic echoes between the first poem in the collection and the last do encourage us to look at this change in priorities as character development of a sort.<sup>49</sup> The change in the speaker's feelings about the prospect of old age is just one aspect of the broader shifts in his attitudes towards war, wealth, life, and love that have occurred by the end of the book.

Book two of Tibullus is a separate entity from book one in many respects, but does hark back to it. One such instance is the recurrence of the theme of love in old age at 2.2.17-20, again incorporating the image of grey hair; the passage and the poem as a whole are significant especially for their effect on 2.3, the poem that introduces Nemesis. In 2.2, Tibullus describes the celebration of Cornutus's birthday by prayers and offerings at the shrine of his Genius. Tibullus predicts what Cornutus will wish for, over all other blessings: the faithful love of a wife (2.2.11-16).<sup>50</sup> When Cornutus says his prayers,<sup>51</sup> the wishes for

<sup>48</sup> See Boyd 1984: 279. This final part of the poem (1.10.53-68) is discussed above, pg. 108-10.

<sup>49</sup> See Gaiser 1983: 72.

<sup>50</sup> The phrase (*uxoris . . . amores*) could mean either 'the love of a (future) wife', or 'the love of his (current) wife', but, as Murgatroyd (1994: 69-70) and Maltby (2002: 386) explain, the poem makes most sense if Cornutus is meant to be unmarried as yet. Cairns (1998: 204-5) suggests that he is to be imagined as getting married on his birthday.

their fulfilment that Tibullus expresses next make clear that his prediction was accurate, and that Cornutus has indeed wished for marital *concordia*:

*uota cadunt: utinam strepitantibus aduolet alis  
flauaque coniugio uincula portet Amor,  
uincula quae maneant semper dum tarda senectus  
inducat rugas inficiatque comas.  
hic ueniat, Natalis,<sup>52</sup> auis prolemque ministret,  
ludat et ante tuos turba nouella pedes. (2.2.17-22)*

The image of the *flaua uincula* of Amor, that will remain even when those whom they bind together have gone grey, is a dense and striking one. The word *flaua*, applied to chains, must mean something like ‘golden’, with all the same positive connotations of value and incorruptibility that the phrase would have in English, perhaps combined with those of festivity that the Romans attached to the colour yellow.<sup>53</sup> As André (1949: 128-9) and Bradley (2009: 1-6) explain, though, the primary meaning of *flauus* is not ‘yellow’, but ‘blonde’ – in other words, it is a hair-colour word, applied in a semi-figurative sense to other objects, rather than a generalised colour word that is sometimes applied to hair.<sup>54</sup> Using a hair-colour word here makes for an elegantly interconnected pair of images; alongside the other positive connotations attached to a golden colour, it suggests that, though Cornutus and his wife may go grey, the chains of love that are to bind them together will retain the youthful lustre that their hair has lost: the pair will remain young at heart.<sup>55</sup> Remembering Tibullus’s description of the nature of Delia’s hold over him, at 1.5.43-4 (*non facit hoc uerbis; facie tenerisque lacertis / deuouet et flauis nostra puella comis*), one might also detect in the image

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<sup>51</sup> As Den Boeft (1980) explains, the phrase *uota cadunt* (2.2.17) means only that Cornutus speaks at this point, and not that his prayers are instantly fulfilled; see also Maltby 1996: 93-4.

<sup>52</sup> On this reading, see Cairns (1998: 218-22), who translates, ‘may he [Amor], birthday, come as a bird [of good omen] and provide offspring’. For an alternative interpretation, emending *hic* to *huc*, taking *Natalis* as the subject, and reading *auis* as dative plural of *auus*, see Maltby 1996: 94-5.

<sup>53</sup> Yellow seems to have been particularly associated with weddings; see Smith 1913, Murgatroyd 1994, and Maltby 2002, all *ad loc.*; La Follette 1994: 55-6; Cairns 1998: 204 n.4.

<sup>54</sup> All other uses of the word in Tibullus refer to hair. It is used of Ceres, at 1.1.15; of Delia’s hair, at 1.5.44; of a Gaulish tribe, at 1.7.12; and of wheat, described as the earth’s hair (*deponit flauas annua terra comas*), at 2.1.48. Bradley cites the use of *flaua* at 2.2.18 as an exceptional one, but takes no firm stand on its interpretation (2009: 5-6).

<sup>55</sup> See Putnam 1973: *ad loc.*

of *flava uincola* a suggestion of the wife's beauty as the force that binds her and Cornutus together, and a reassurance that the devotion it inspires will outlive her actual blondeness. Along with a perpetually youthful love, however, the pair will also enjoy an appropriately peaceful old age (*tarda senectus*, 2.2.19), complete with children and grandchildren (2.2.21-2). The image of their grey hair contributes towards this atmosphere of comfortable respectability.

The general tone and content of the passage, as well as being pleasant and complimentary to Cornutus, recall some of the passages from book one examined above. Tibullus's wish for Cornutus is similar to those which he had for himself and Delia at 1.6.85-6, but with the crucial difference that here they are realistic hopes, and not doomed fantasies: the Genius's assent to the prayer is confidently predicted (2.2.10). But 2.2 also recalls 1.10.39-44, especially coming after 2.1, which, like 1.10, glorifies the peace of the countryside, and is full of nostalgia for rural life and folk religious practices. In both 1.10 and 2.2, wealth is of less value than a happy family life (1.10.7-10; 2.2.13-16),<sup>56</sup> and old age, which is characterised in similar terms in the two poems (*pigra senecta*, 1.10.40; *tarda senectus*, 2.2.19), is a pleasant prospect (compare 1.10.43-4 to 2.2.19-20). This connection between 1.10 and 2.2 is reinforced by the closing image of Cornutus's grandchildren playing at the foot of the shrine of his Genius (2.2.22), which recalls that of Tibullus playing in front of the shrine of the household Lares in his youth (1.10.15-16). Considering these reminiscences of 1.6.85-6 and especially 1.10, one might suggest that there is an air of wistfulness in Tibullus's wishes for Cornutus: that he envies Cornutus the life that he is to lead, from the perspective of one who is less likely to achieve such blessings.<sup>57</sup>

This latent wistfulness adds significance to the placement of 2.3, the poem in which

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<sup>56</sup> On the echo of the anti-wealth theme that runs through 1.1 and 1.10 in 2.2.13-16, see Cesareo 1929: 73-4. Maltby points out the contrast between this idea and the attitudes to wealth put forward in 2.3 (2002: *ad* 2.2.13-16).

<sup>57</sup> Consider the contrast between the *flava uincola* 2.2.18-19 and the chains binding Tibullus to Delia at 1.1.55; see Lee-Stecum 2000: 187-8.

Nemesis is introduced, directly after 2.2. There is no reference to grey hair or old age in 2.3, to allude directly to 2.2.17-20, but the first line of 2.3 is addressed to Cornutus, which at once establishes a connection between the two poems more generally. This connection informs our understanding of Nemesis's influence on Tibullus, which is depicted as markedly different from Delia's. Whereas Delia had prompted doomed but idyllic fantasies of a happy life together in the countryside, Nemesis's holiday at a country villa with a rich rival instead causes Tibullus to speak of embracing wealth, if that is the only way to pique her interest, and even to curse the countryside for taking her from him (2.3.49-66): in other words, to overturn the anti-greed and pro-rural values he has espoused up to this point. His vision of life in the countryside with his mistress is now one of slavery and toil (2.3.5-10),<sup>58</sup> rather than of idealised rural peace. Lyne describes the difference succinctly: 'it had been Delia's privilege to be the crown of [Tibullus's great] dream but by being that crown to render the dream impossible. Nemesis has the power to make Tibullus simply and completely renounce it' (1980:169).<sup>59</sup> The connections in theme and imagery between 2.2 and the earlier poems that it alludes to, then, give it greater significance and a more important role to play in book two than as a detour into elegant occasional poetry. Seen in its full context, it communicates not just bland praise of Cornutus, but a more personal longing on the part of the speaker for a stable and mutual love that can last into grey-haired old age. Its echoes of 1.10 in particular remind us of the important connection between the image of contented love in old age and that of peaceful life in the countryside, which 2.1 has already reawakened. Placing these images fresh in our minds as we start to read 2.3 strengthens the impact of the clash in priorities that Nemesis has caused in Tibullus.

The image of grey hair, then, fulfils several functions in Tibullus, both in its

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<sup>58</sup> On the *exemplum* of Apollo as servant to Admetus that follows (2.3.11-30), see below, pg. 205-8.

<sup>59</sup> For the full discussion, see Lyne 1980: 164-9; see also Cairns 1979: 153-5. Note that, to increase the impact of the differences between Delia's influence and Nemesis's, Tibullus suppresses Nemesis's name until line 51 (precisely the point at which the difference becomes most apparent), allowing the reader of book one to assume until this point that the woman in question is Delia.

immediate, context-specific effects at each occurrence, and by flagging up connections between poems, as a repeated motif. Its versatility as an image allows Tibullus to use it for either or both of two seemingly contradictory purposes: to turn love in old age into a frightening prospect, by bringing forward its more unseemly or pathetic incarnations, as at 1.1.71-2, 1.2.92, and 1.8.41-6, or to make togetherness in old age into something to envy and look forward to, as at 1.6.85-6, 1.10.43-44, and 2.2.17-20. There is no practical need to use the same image for both purposes; old age has plenty of attributes to choose from. Doing so, though, encourages us to see connections and contrasts between these different perceptions of love in old age and their different contexts: 1.6.77-86 and 1.10.39-44 are enriched by their reminiscences of 1.1.71-4 and 1.2.89-96; they in turn inform 2.2, especially in its role in preparing us for 2.3. The various associations of love in old age, whether examined with reference to the speaker's own relationships, or his take on other people's, thus work to characterise the respective advantages and disadvantages of the two faces of elegiac love, namely youthful, sexual passion, and more stable, exclusive emotional attachment, and to communicate the complexities of thought and feeling arising from the lover's pursuit of two opposed ideals, and acknowledgement of the remoteness of both.

## Part 2: Age and Grey Hair in Propertius

Propertius's use of the image of grey hair makes for an interesting comparison with Tibullus's. The use of old age as a threat to women, which we saw most clearly at Tib. 1.8.41-8, does come up in Propertius, both as a vindictive curse levelled at Cynthia at the end of their affair (3.25.11-18) and as an encouragement to take lovers, addressed by Acanthis the *lena* to her pupil (4.5.59-62). In the latter passage, wrinkles are mentioned, but grey hair is not. Acanthis's own age and ugliness, incidentally, are conveyed in part by her thinning hair (*rari. . . capilli*, 4.5.71), but not by grey. In 3.25, the reference to grey hair (*uellere tum*

*cupias albos a stirpe capillos*, 3.25.13) is so ineptly similar to that at Tib. 1.8.45 (*tollere tum cura est albos a stirpe capillos*) as to suggest textual corruption rather than allusion;<sup>60</sup> if this is the case, we cannot be sure whether line 15 ought to follow immediately on line 12, or whether 3.25.13-14 as it now stands has replaced an original couplet, which may or may not have mentioned grey hair. This disputed case is the only one in which Propertius uses grey hair in the way in which Tibullus uses it in 1.1, 1.2, and 1.8, as a frightening prospect for lovers. Most often, Propertius instead engages the positive connotations of grey hair, using it as shorthand for a long life, in contexts that evoke its connotations of lasting affection and faithfulness in couples. At 1.8.45-6, jubilant at Cynthia's decision not to go overseas with a rival, he predicts that their current happy union will survive until he is old and grey; at 2.13.39-40, he hopes that when he is dead, Cynthia will continue to visit his grave for love of him until her own death in grey-haired old age; and at 2.16.21-2, disillusioned by Cynthia's greed for gifts, he imagines that, if there were no such thing as wealth, girls would no longer be fickle, but each grow grey in one household. A major difference between these images and the positive images of love in old age in Tibullus (1.6.85-6; 1.10.39-44; 2.2.17-20) is that they are not responses to and developments on earlier, negative images within the same corpus. This gives them a different character: instead of being backward-looking reconsiderations of an opposite message (Tib. 1.10.39-44), or tinged with ironic humour, dependent on our recall of earlier statements (1.6.85-6), they stand relatively independently. Their effect, then, depends more on their immediate contexts, and on any reference that they may make to each other. Furthermore, all three passages, 1.8.45-6 and 2.13.39-40 especially, occur in contexts that make them relevant not only to Propertius's expectations about the longevity of his relationship with Cynthia, but about the potential immortality of his verse – a concern of the lover-poet that is less prominent in Tibullus generally, and which he does not

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<sup>60</sup> Heyworth marks the couplet (3.25.13-14) as an interpolation; see 2007: 412-13.

use grey hair to symbolise. In two later poems, 2.18.5-20<sup>61</sup> and 3.5, Propertius expands on the concepts explored in these passages, taking the relationships between love and old age and between poetry and *tempestiuitas* (respectively) as central themes, and again using the image of his future grey hair as a vehicle for these ideas; before moving on to these poems, though, we must consider the three earlier passages that, along with Tibullus's and others' treatment of the same imagery, lay the groundwork for them.

In the first of these, delighted that Cynthia has decided to stay in Rome with him, rather than travel with his rival to Illyria, Propertius predicts that this triumph represents a permanent shift in Cynthia's priorities: *nec mihi riualis certos subducet amores: / ista meam norit gloria canitiem* (1.8.45-6). Gold (1985: 151-6) suggests that the *gloria* in question consists not only of Cynthia's love, but of the fact that it was won through poetry: the final couplet, she argues, as well as presaging Cynthia's eternal love and faithfulness, predicts poetic immortality for the speaker, springing from the persuasive success of the preceding poem, 1.8.1-26.<sup>62</sup> This is a highly plausible interpretation, given the allusions to earlier poets in both poems that make up 1.8,<sup>63</sup> together with Propertius's own suggestion that his success proves the existence of the Muses and Apollo's support of lovers (1.8.39-42), and the double meaning, frequent in elegy, of *amores* (1.8.45) as both 'love affair' and 'love poetry'.<sup>64</sup> Commentators have noted that the phrasing of the final line is surprising – that *mea canities* would have made a more rational subject for the verb, with *istam gloriam* as object.<sup>65</sup> This is, in part, simply a way of making the phrase more striking, and thus of ending the poem on an

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<sup>61</sup> This passage is here taken as belonging to one poem, separate from the rest of 2.18. On the text of 2.18, see above, pg. 29, n.37 (for general comments), and below, pg. 166, n.96 (on lines 5-20 in particular).

<sup>62</sup> Most editors and commentators (exceptions being Fedeli and Richardson) divide 1.8 into two poems, after line 26. This is probably justified (see Butler & Barber 1933: 166; Camps 1966: 64; Heyworth 2007: 37-8; *contra*, see Butrica 1996), but the two resulting poems remain a very closely interconnected pair. For a good summary of the relationship between them, see Gold 1985: 148-51.

<sup>63</sup> See Gold 1985: 151-3.

<sup>64</sup> See also Schmidt 1980: 325; he points out that Propertius's success as poet and lover in 1.8 proves the point made to Ponticus in the surrounding poems, 1.7 and 1.9, about the advantages of elegy over epic.

<sup>65</sup> See Camps 1966: *ad loc.*; Richardson 1976: *ad loc.* (who suggests that 'this extraordinary inversion may be intended to reflect the poet's almost inebriated exuberance'); and Gold 1985: 156.

energetic note, but it also helps to give Propertius's *gloria* a certain sense of agency, as an entity separate from him and his old age. Giving his *gloria* a life of its own in this way works differently as relates to each of its two aspects, his success as a lover and as a poet.

Suggesting that it will view his *canities* from the outside, as a separate entity, implies that Propertius's *gloria* will remain unchanged even while he ages and changes – that his (and Cynthia's) love will remain youthful, even when they are old; compare the *flava uincula* of Tib. 2.2.17-20, discussed above. But it also reinforces the idea of the immortality of Propertius's poetry, as contrasted with own mortality:<sup>66</sup> he will grow old and die, but if the success of his poetry is to let it live long enough to witness his old age, we can extrapolate that it will continue to live on, beyond his death. Especially in its self-referentially poetic context, the image of both Propertius's sources of glory witnessing his *canities* also evokes the scenario, familiar from Greek lyric, of the grey-haired love-poet regretting, lamenting, or defiantly resisting his or her forced retirement from the pleasures of youth.<sup>67</sup> The idea that Propertius and Cynthia will easily carry on as they are now, well into his *canities*, makes his success not simply a victory for love poetry, but for himself within the genre: his double *gloria* is such that he will not have to follow the precedent of the sad grey-haired love poets of the past.

In the next mention of grey hair by Propertius, at 2.13.39-40, it is Cynthia's grey-haired old age that is visualised, and not Propertius's own, as he now imagines himself dying young. The tone of 2.13 is, on the whole,<sup>68</sup> very different from that of the jubilant 1.8.27-46, but the poems share a number of themes. As at 1.8.45-6, but more explicitly, Propertius again imagines that his poetry's ability to win him Cynthia's love will earn him poetic immortality

<sup>66</sup> On this contrast, see Gold 1985: 156-7.

<sup>67</sup> See Sappho fr. 58 (L-P); Anacr. fr. 358, 395, and possibly 418 and 420 (Page); *Anacreontea* fr.1.6-7 and fr. 7, 39, 51 (Page); *Anth. Pal.* 5.22.5 (Rufinus); 5.112.3-4 (Philodemus); 11.54 (Palladas).

<sup>68</sup> I am treating 2.13 as one poem, and not dividing it, as some editors do (e.g. Barber, Fedeli), after line 16. For arguments for the poem's unity, supported by discussion of the progression of its themes, see Enk 1956; Wilkinson 1966; Camps 1967: 115; and Heyworth 1992.

(2.13.5-8); the acknowledgement that this will not also mean physical immortality, though, which was felt only through mild implication in 1.8.45-6, here underpins the remainder of the poem, as, from line 17 onwards, Propertius contemplates his own death, and its various implications for him as a poet and a lover. On the poetic side, there is no cause for worry: as a Callimachean devotee of *graciles Musae* (2.13.3), he would be content with a simple funeral, little urn, and narrow grave (2.13.17-24, 32, 33).<sup>69</sup> Since Cynthia is the only critic whose opinion matters (2.13.11-14), she and his books will be all the cortege he needs (2.13.25-30); the image unites the idea of Callimachean smallness of scope with that of love and poetry as the elegist's all-consuming priorities. Continuing in this vein, Propertius asks for his grave to be marked in such a way as to proclaim his status both as poet and lover, with a bay tree, and a short verse proclaiming his single-minded allegiance to Cynthia (2.13.33-6), as this will be enough to grant it (and him) eternal fame (2.13.37-8). This idea of love as well as poetry granting a sort of immortality prompts contemplation of that other potential source of life after death for his love affair, the continued devotion of the 'widowed' Cynthia. Ideally, she should live on,<sup>70</sup> but be buried with him one day (*tu quoque si quando uenies ad fata, memento, / huc iterum*<sup>71</sup> *ad lapides cana ueni memores*, 2.13.39-40), and continue loving him in the meantime (2.13.41-2). Like Propertius's own grey hair at 1.8.45-6, the future Cynthia's is in part an economical way of expressing the hope that she will have a long life, but also communicates more: in this case, Propertius's specific hopes for Cynthia's behaviour in the event of his death. The long-term faith and devotion of wives, as we have seen in Tibullus (1.6.85-6; 2.2.17-20), can be symbolised by their grey hair. In short, Propertius hopes Cynthia will act like a wife – and not just any wife, but an *uniuira*: a wife

<sup>69</sup> On the Callimachean aspects of 2.13, see Wilkinson 1966: 142-3; on the funeral scene imagined in 2.13 as the expression of Propertius's elegiac values, see Houghton 2011: 62-3. For more on Callimachean fineness, see above, pg. 37-8, on Prop. 2.1.

<sup>70</sup> If she doesn't commit suicide at once, that is; on the unsettling allusion to the sacrifice of Polyxena at 2.13.37-8, see Heyworth 1992: 56.

<sup>71</sup> This is Kiessling's emendation of the MSS's *hoc iter*; see Heyworth 2007: 166-7.

who, if widowed, never remarries.<sup>72</sup> This would be the ideal rather than the usual reality even for actually married couples, and so expecting Cynthia to act this way can be little more than a fantasy. While the tone of 1.8.45-6, with its similar theme, was ultimately confident, 2.13.39-42 is half wish, half warning. As the conditional clause at line 15 has made clear (*quae si forte bonas ad pacem uerterit aures. . .*), Cynthia's affection seems less certain and reliable than Propertius's own – and will be less so still, once he is dead.<sup>73</sup> Hence his concern to warn her that he will still be watching her (2.13.41-2), the shift in tone at line 43, and the dismal sentiments and desperate pleas that make up the rest of the poem.<sup>74</sup> Immortality as a poet is still a foregone conclusion, as Propertius's self-confident vision of his funeral attests, but the promise of an eternal, mutual love as an additional source of life after death is less assured than it seemed at 1.8.45-6, if Cynthia cannot safely be relied upon to play the role of devoted widow at all, let alone well into her grey-haired old age.

The third example of grey hair as a symbol of faithful love in Propertius, at 2.16.21-2, has less explicit relation to the theme of his hopes for immortal renown as a lover-poet, but the close connections between the two halves of 2.16<sup>75</sup> and the two halves of 1.8 do suggest that this theme should be kept in our minds. The most obvious connection between the two pairs of poems is that 2.16.1-14 apparently concerns the same rival who threatened to steal Cynthia away to Illyria in 1.8.1-26 (now back, and richer than ever),<sup>76</sup> and that 2.16.15-56 is a reflection on the power of money over love, and Cynthia's lack of discrimination in choosing lovers, beyond an appraisal of the expensive gifts they can offer her – the reverse of

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<sup>72</sup> On the social and literary significance of the concept of the *uniuira*, see Williams 1958: 23-4, Lightman & Zeisel 1977; Walcot 1991: 21-6.

<sup>73</sup> Compare his own neglectful behaviour after Cynthia's death, as narrated by her ghost in the altogether topsy-turvy situation of 4.7.

<sup>74</sup> On the shadow of doubt in line 15 preparing us for the uncertainty and desperation of 2.13.43ff., see Enk 1956: 190; Wilkinson 1966: 144; Richardson 1976: *ad* 2.13.43-58.

<sup>75</sup> On the division of 2.16 into two poems at line 14, see Sandbach 1958; Heyworth 2007: 177-9.

<sup>76</sup> Richardson (1976: 166-7) disputes the identification of the praetor of 2.16.1 with the unidentified rival of 1.8. Mention of Illyria, though, and the implication in lines 3-4 that Propertius was familiar with the praetor before he left Rome, encourage the linking of the two.

the triumph of love and poetry over wealth celebrated in 1.8.27-46.<sup>77</sup> Here again the image of grey hair reinforces the idea of eternal, faithful love, but this time not as a prize that has been won, or even something that can be tentatively hoped for, but as an unattainable goal. Disillusioned by Cynthia's mercenary nature, Propertius imagines how different women's behaviour would be if there were no rich men around: *numquam uenales essent amicae / atque una fieret cana puella domo* (2.16.21-2). As at 1.8.45-6 and 2.13.39-40, on the most basic level, the image suggests the long duration of the hypothetical *puella's* fidelity. But, through the juxtaposition of the words *amicae* and *puella* with the image of growing grey *una . . . domo*, it also points up the contrast between a fickle mistress and the kind of woman who already does grow grey in one house: in short, if no man were rich, mistresses would act like faithful wives. This is, of course, precisely what Propertius was convinced that Cynthia would do at 1.8.45-6, but only hoped she would do at 2.13.39-40. In a continuation of this decline in Propertius's confidence, the idea of any *puella*, let alone Cynthia, remaining faithful into her old age is now placed on a par with the unlikely image of the *dux* himself living in a thatched hut (2.16.19-20).<sup>78</sup>

In the first two passages examined, then (1.8.45-56 and 2.13.39-40), the image of grey hair, both as indicator of the passage of time, and symbol of long-term devotion, helps to link the themes of eternal love and eternal fame. In 1.8, in which both prizes are depicted as certain, the distinction between the two is minimal – the former, being the direct result of poetic success, will ensure the latter – and the image of their witnessing the speaker's future grey hair emphasises the unique longevity of both in his case. In 2.13, these two sources of glory for the lover-poet remain linked, now more explicitly as types of immortality, but eternal love has become the less dependable of the two: it is an ideal to be hoped for and

<sup>77</sup> Schmidt (1980) provides a methodical list and analysis of the many verbal echoes and thematic reversals of 1.8 to be found in 2.16; he does not divide either into two poems, but his comments are for the most part equally valid if one does prefer to divide them.

<sup>78</sup> An offhand but pointed barb, considering the proximity of Augustus's actual home to the *casa Romuli* on the Palatine; see Edwards 1996: 32-43, especially 40.

encouraged, but is too dependent on Cynthia's fidelity to be reliable, as the conceit of Propertius's death emphasises, by diminishing his control over the situation. The image of the speaker himself as a triumphant grey-haired lover-poet in 1.8 – an exception to the rule – is replaced with that of Cynthia as grey-haired, faithful widow: an equally unexpected image, but now in such a way as to make it actively implausible. By 2.16, the eternal love side of the equation is completely overturned by the circumstances of the narrative. The images of himself and Cynthia as devoted grey-haired lovers seen at 1.8.45-6 and 2.13.39-40, respectively, are at 2.16.21-2 negated by the implication that, as long as wealth and greed exist, no such state of long-term devotion can be hoped for, either for them or for any other pair of lovers. Propertius does not suggest that this means an end to his hopes for poetic immortality; the way of things as it appears in 2.16 is depicted as a triumph for wealth, rather than a failure for poetry as a whole. If we read *Musa* rather than *mensa*<sup>79</sup> at 2.16.33-4 (*tot iam abiere dies cum me nec cura theatri / nec tetigit Campi nec mea Musa iuuat*), the idea touched on in both earlier poems, of Propertius's renown resulting specifically from the success of his poetry in drawing Cynthia to himself (1.8.39-46; 2.13.5-8), is revisited in his loss of enthusiasm for poetry as a persuasive tool.<sup>80</sup> But this is not accompanied by any clear anxiety about his more general identity as a poet, or prospect of immortal fame. We can, then, observe in 1.8, 2.13, and 2.16, in part via the development through the three poems of the image of grey hair as symbol of long-term devotion, a gradual differentiation between the persuasive power of poetry and the fame and immortality won by the poet. The conceptual gap between the poems written to woo Cynthia by Propertius's lover-poet persona and the poems we are reading gradually widens through the course of books one and two, and the

<sup>79</sup> Barber, Fedeli, and Goold print *mensa*; Rothstein and Heyworth print *Musa*. In defense of *Musa*, see Schmidt 1980: 326; Heyworth 2007: 182-3.

<sup>80</sup> As Schmidt explains (1980: 324-8), lack of interest in the theatre and the Campus is not a generalised sign of listlessness, but is relevant to the context. These are places one goes to meet women (he cites Prop. 2.22.4-7 and 2.23.5-6, among other sources), and writing poems is the elegist's means of wooing them; Propertius is in no mood to do either.

speaker's own devotion to both love and poetry becomes more important as a source of fame and immortality than any benefits that either his constancy or his poems actually win him within the narrative.

The image of Propertius's own grey hair comes up again in book three, but is used to different purpose, albeit in another poem that concerns the long-term future of his role as a lover and a poet. At 1.8.45-6, as we have seen, Propertius had alluded to the idea, familiar from Greek lyric, of the poet contemplating the need to give up love at the onset of grey<sup>81</sup> – one incarnation of the concept of *tempestiuitas*, the natural fitness of certain pursuits to the different stages of life – but does so only to emphasise that he is an exception to the trend. In 3.5, he alludes to the same trope, and extends the idea to include one of its corollaries: the fitness of certain poetic genres to certain stages of the poet's life. According to this line of thinking, love poetry, perceived as light and inconsequential, is excusable in youth, but more serious genres, such as epic, didactic, or tragedy, are more appropriate to one's maturity and old age.<sup>82</sup> In 3.5, Propertius imagines himself following just such a career path, and making the expected shift away from love and love poetry when he starts to grow grey:

*me iuuat in prima coluisse Helicon iuuenta  
 Musarumque choris implicuisse manus;  
 me iuuat<sup>83</sup> et multo mentem uincire Lyaeo  
 et caput in uerna semper habere rosa.  
 atque ubi iam Venerem grauis interceperit aetas  
 sparserit et nigras alba senecta comas,  
 tum mihi naturae libeat perdiscere mores,  
 quis deus hanc mundi temperet arte domum. (3.5.19-26)*

Over the next twenty lines – that is, for the rest of the poem, barring the final couplet – he lists all the similar questions in natural philosophy that he plans to investigate once he gives up love and love elegy. In isolation, taking up philosophy in one's old age would seem rather a bland and inoffensive plan, and is the sort of pursuit that Vergil (*Georg.* 2.475-94) and

<sup>81</sup> See above, pg. 128, n.6

<sup>82</sup> See Mader 2003: 116-22.

<sup>83</sup> For reasons to prefer this reading (printed by Barber, Camps, Goold, and Heyworth) over *iuuet* (printed in both positions by Rothstein and Fedeli), see Conte 2000: 309-10 and Heyworth 2007: 301.

Horace (*Epist.* 1.12.12-20; 1.18.96-103) depict as admirable.<sup>84</sup> It gains further meaning and force, however, when examined in its immediate context, which consists not only of the rest of 3.5, but of 3.4, as the two poems, both on the theme of the lover's attitude to war and peace, are clearly to be read as a pair.<sup>85</sup> The first purports to be a celebration of Augustus's planned Eastern campaigns: Propertius encourages his forces on their way, wishes for their victory, and anticipates watching their triumphal processions go by, from the comfort of Cynthia's lap. As Stahl explains, however, 'once the character of 3.5 as a disguised recantation of 3.4 is recognized, the meaning of 3.4 is reversed into the opposite of what it originally seemed, from blessing and praise to curse and condemnation' (1985: 195). This relationship between the two poems is established from the first line of 3.5 (*Pacis Amor deus est; pacem ueneramur amantes*), which recalls the first words of 3.4 (*Arma deus Caesar dites meditatur ad Indos*), but puts them in an altogether new and uncomplimentary light. Through the rest of the introductory part of 3.5, up to the passage starting from line 19, quoted above, Propertius does nothing but find fault with war and the greed that motivates it; the poem's connections with 3.4 hint that these are not generalised sentiments, but a comment on contemporary politics. In this context, his statement that once he is done with love, he has enough plans for philosophical works to keep him busy for the rest of his life is as much as to say that anyone who expects him to shift from love poetry into panegyric is bound to be disappointed.<sup>86</sup> In the light of this overall tone of defiance, how seriously are we to take Propertius's stated intentions for the latter half of his life (in terms, that is, of the tone and subtext of the poem at hand, rather than the poet's real-life career plans)? Irony pervades a similar poem, 2.10, which claims to introduce Propertius's abandonment of love poetry in favour of military subjects (and for similar reasons: *aetas prima canat Veneres, extrema*

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<sup>84</sup> On the catalogue of philosophical themes as a trope both of poetry and of philosophical prose (including a discussion of Prop. 3.5), see La Penna 1995.

<sup>85</sup> See Stahl 1985: 192-205.

<sup>86</sup> See Stahl 1985: 202-4; Mader 2003: 122-9; Heyworth 2007a: 116-17.

*tumultus: / bella canam, quando scripta puella mea est*, 2.10.7-8), but marks no discernible change of this kind in his subject matter or approach.<sup>87</sup> Is Propertius being as ironic in 3.5 as he was in that poem, and in the same way? Is he lampooning the philosophical life, using it as an essentially neutral vehicle for his point about love, war, and poetry, or being earnest in his praise of it? The deferral to grey-haired old age of his plans to take up philosophy, in contrast to the immediacy of his plan to take up epic in 2.10, complicates the issue. But a closer examination of the passage quoted above (3.5.19-26), and the way in which the image of Propertius's future grey hair contributes to it, may shed some light on it.

The first half of 3.5, up to the list of philosophical subjects, recalls Tib. 1.10. As in that poem, the contrast between the early death courted by soldiers (compare Tib. 1.10.33-38 to Prop. 3.5.11-18) and a calm and pleasant old age (Tib. 1.10.39-44; Prop. 3.5.23ff.) is used to argue in favour of peace. However, while Tibullus's proposed future occupation (a life of rural peace) already seems appealing to him, making him actively wish for old age, Propertius proposes two separate, age-specific alternatives to war: love and love poetry make him happy now (3.5.19-22), and philosophy, he hopes, will make him happy later (3.5.25). Given the mild disdain for love poetry as trivial and immature as compared with philosophy and didactic which might be expected to accompany praise of the latter category, the equation in their value suggested here can be read as a stealthy suggestion of the validity of love as a lifestyle and elegy as a genre. This suggestion seems more explicit when we compare the passage from the *Georgics* cited above (2.475-94), in which Vergil depicts rural pursuits as a consolation prize, should the 'cold blood around his heart' prevent him from pursuing the more laudable goal of philosophical writing; Propertius instead makes philosophy the fallback occupation, to be pursued only once love and love poetry are no longer an option.<sup>88</sup> Conte's note (2000) on the echoes of Lucretius 4.1-17 to be found in 3.5.19-24 is also

<sup>87</sup> See Nethercut 1972; Stahl 1985: 156-62; Heyworth 2007a: 114-15.

<sup>88</sup> For a comparison of the two passages, see Hubbard 1974: 82.

instructive. These echoes (the repetition of *iuuat*; reference to wearing a wreath of flowers, and being a special favourite of the Muses; binding the mind with wine, versus loosing the mind from superstition) come in the description of the life of the lover-poet, and not that of the philosopher. This, like the reordering of Vergil's priorities, suggests not only that the fitness of love poetry to youth makes it a pursuit as laudable for the young as philosophy is for the old, but even that it is in some way superior to philosophy. Conte (2000: 309) suggests that there is a shift to a more serious tone at line 23, and that the long list of philosophical subjects through which Propertius gives us a taste of his supposed future works demonstrates that his dig at philosophy has been an affectionate one.

However, while it may be the case that Propertius does not go on to disparage or ridicule philosophical writing, he does make clear that he is not yet ready or eager to embrace it himself. The couplet at which the topic shifts from his present occupations to his future ones (*atque ubi iam Venerem grauis interceperit aetas / sparserit et nigras alba senecta comas*, 3.5.23-4) contains the image that here concerns us most, of the anticipated onset of Propertius's grey hair. It is very vivid, compared with the brief phrases and single words used to describe grey and greying in the poems discussed above, and helps to flag up this important turning-point in the poem. The line's effect was clearly striking enough to catch Ovid's attention, as he quotes it almost verbatim at *Trist.* 4.8.2 (*inficit et nigras alba senecta comas*).<sup>89</sup> The strong visual contrast between white old age and the black hair of youth, in the juxtaposition of *nigras* and *alba*, emphasises the difference between youth and age, and thus between the pursuits associated with each. And this effect is further magnified by the contrast that the image as a whole presents with what precedes it: Propertius's current identity as devotee of love and poetry is, like his future *grauitas*, communicated in part through the state of his head, which he rejoices in keeping 'bound' with wine and wreathed in roses

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<sup>89</sup> On *Trist.* 4.8, see below, pg. 241-2.

(3.5.21-2).<sup>90</sup> The appearance of white hairs will make the wearing of a wreath of spring roses, along with all the activities that that symbolises, the writing of love poetry among them (3.5.19-20), visually incongruous as well as inappropriate in the more abstract sense.<sup>91</sup> The idea that old age will put an end to love (*atque ubi iam Venerem grauis interceperit aetas*, 3.5.23) is certainly not a point in its favour from the elegiac point of view, and so we might have expected the image of Propertius's greying hair in line 24 to be made unpleasant, or to communicate some kind of dread. However, this is not the case. Unlike *inficit* ('dyes') in Ovid's version, which suggests a sudden and striking change from black to white, *sparsarit* ('sprinkles') suggests an at first subtle change, and a slow and gentle process overall, evoking the accumulation of snow. This is not only an apt and rather pleasant way of describing the process of greying, but evokes appropriately calm and quiet associations for the period of life described in the previous line as *gravis aetas*.<sup>92</sup> The contrast between the quiet evocativeness of this image and the more boisterous appeal of the images of dancing, drinking, and banqueting that precede it dramatises the expected shift in Propertius's attitude from hedonism to contemplation.

Hints later in the poem, though, give away the fact that, as we might have expected, this shift has not yet taken place in earnest. One might suggest, in particular, that the questions about the nature of the underworld that make up the second part of the list of philosophical subjects (3.5.39-46) are a sidelong and almost tongue-in-cheek reference back to the antagonism shown, earlier in the poem, towards the idea of rushing to meet death (3.5.11-18): Propertius would rather ponder the afterlife well into old age than hurry to find

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<sup>90</sup> On wreaths as a marker of the lover-poet's unique status, see above, pg. 86-8. See also Conte 2000: 309.

<sup>91</sup> For the visual and symbolic contrast between a wreath of red roses and white hair, see *Anacreontea* 51 (Page). In that poem, the validity of the wearing of roses (and thus of banqueting, love, and so on) among the white-haired is defended by analogy with the pleasing appearance of red roses next to white lilies; the very need for such a defence, however, demonstrates the incongruity perceived to be inherent in the former image. Mention of spring (*uerna . . . rosa*), which is associated with youth, here adds to the contrast.

<sup>92</sup> Contrast the atmosphere created here with the urgent one of descriptions of future grey calculated to scare their addressees, such as Tib. 1.8.41-6, discussed above.

out the answers to these questions at first hand. The final couplet (*exitus hic uitae superest mihi; uos quibus arma / grata magis, Crassi signa referte domum*, 3.5.47-8) continues in this vein, dismissing, in all senses of the word, those who prefer conflict over either love or philosophy. Evidently, Propertius is still young enough at heart to let the principle espoused in the first line, that ‘Love is the god of peace’, translate into sarcastic disdain for the campaigns of the current regime. In other words, he is still thinking like a lover-poet, and cannot resist making it clear that even if he were eventually to adopt a different genre, some things would not change.

It would seem, then, that the intent to turn to philosophy that is, among other things, the vehicle for Propertius’s anti-war sentiments in 3.5 is, in a certain sense, being presented ironically, but not to the same degree or in the same way as the desire to turn to panegyric professed in 2.10. In the earlier poem, the mask being adopted – that of an epicised appreciation for military exploits – was closely connected with the life of warfare being rejected; the irony was direct. Here, Propertius instead considers a third option, which he depicts as not at all the same as the life of love, and therefore not for him (yet), but as similar to it in value, if only because both are preferable to war.<sup>93</sup> In the end, though the comparison does more to raise up elegy than it does to praise philosophy, the latter is neither ridiculed nor dismissed. It is simply used as a neutral intermediary through which to reject war and the poetry that glorifies it. Propertius’s use of the image of grey hair as a symbol of *grauitas* (in the broader sense, rather than only its subset, lifelong fidelity), with its calm but essentially positive tone, is an important aspect of this process. The pleasant, or at least not actively off-putting, image of old age and the process of aging that Propertius conjures up grows out of (and feeds back into) the distaste for the idea of early death that supports the anti-war sentiments bracketing the poem. As in Tib. 1.10, for death at a young age to be as unpleasant

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<sup>93</sup> This tactic has the advantage of being less liable to misconstruction than that adopted in 2.10; even if we take Propertius fully at his word, the anti-war message remains. On the almost too stealthy irony of 2.10, see Nethercut 1972, and especially Stahl 1985: 158.

a prospect as possible – and remember that it is at other times romanticised in elegy<sup>94</sup> – old age and the occupations appropriate to it must be depicted as a pleasant alternative. The convincingly philosophical tone that results from this resignation to aging and the changes it will bring is perhaps not consistently maintained through the actual catalogue that follows,<sup>95</sup> but it does, momentarily at least, anticipate the future shift into contemplation that Propertius prefers to the prospect of a move, now or in the future, into epic or panegyric.

One more of Propertius's elegies in which grey hair plays a prominent role has yet to be discussed: 2.18.5-20,<sup>96</sup> the only poem of his in which the relationship between love and old age is the primary theme. In exploring this theme, it incorporates several of the ideas contributing to those passages analysed so far in this chapter, from Propertius and from Tibullus: the older man in love with a young woman; the ideas of young, passionate love and mature, devoted love, both as disparate ideas and as a unified ideal; the threat of age as a spur to love; and the longevity of love as paired with the immortality of poetry. Each of these themes and motifs, however, is employed in a distinctive way in 2.18.5-20. Propertius starts the sequence as we have it – perhaps prompted, in lines now lost, by some harsh treatment at Cynthia's hands – by wondering how she would treat him if he were old and grey, if this is how she treats him now: *quid mea si iam actis aetas canesceret annis*<sup>97</sup> / *et faceret scissas languida ruga genas?* (2.18.5-6). Instead of answering the question directly, he suggests the answer, by contrasting Cynthia's behaviour with that of Aurora (2.18.7-18), whose love for Tithonus was strong enough for her to remain devoted to him in his unnaturally extended old

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<sup>94</sup> See above, pg. 128 n.11.

<sup>95</sup> Heyworth, in an unpublished paper on Prop. 3.4 and 3.5, argues that the questions remain more poetic than philosophical.

<sup>96</sup> On the text of 2.18, see above, pg. 29, n.37. I shall be treating lines 5-20 as belonging to one poem, but not necessarily making up the whole of one. It seems likely that at least a few lines preceding line 5 have been lost; see Goold's note on the passage in his 1999 edition, and Heyworth 2007: 184. Both these editors follow Burman in transposing lines 13-14 to precede line 9, an ordering which I adopt here.

<sup>97</sup> This is Heyworth's version (1984: 400-1), which I find plausible, of N's *quid mea si canis aetas canesceret annis*, changed by most editors, Rothstein, Barber, Camps, and Richardson included, to *quid mea si canis aetas candesceret annis*. The broad meaning ('what if my hair were grey?'), of course, is the same in all three versions. As at 3.5.24, the wordy phrasing flags up the image's importance.

age, bathing and tending him (2.18.9-10), sleeping with him and kissing his white hair (2.18.17-18). Such was her affection that she did none of this grudgingly, but, on the contrary, rejoiced at it, and was annoyed at having to leave him each morning (2.18.13-14, 11-16).

Throughout the *exemplum*, Propertius makes subtle and original use of both the positive and negative faces of love in old age to make his point. For one thing, in contrast to the usual image of the old man desperately in love with an indifferent or unresponsive young woman,<sup>98</sup> Aurora takes the initiative throughout. It is she who loves Tithonus, bathes him, kisses him; he is the passive recipient of all these attentions, and his thoughts and feelings (though we can of course extrapolate) are never described. His utter passivity is explicable by his unnaturally extended old age – in the version of the story told in the Homeric *Hymn to Aphrodite*, for example, he eventually becomes immobile (*Hymn* 5.233-4) – but it also helps to suppress the humorous possibilities of the situation, and to keep Tithonus from recalling the *senex amator* of comedy, or indeed of Tibullus (1.2.89-96; 1.8.29-30). The final lines (*cum sene non puduit talem dormire puellam / et canae totiens oscula ferre comae*, 2.18.17-18) sum up the preceding depiction of Aurora and Tithonus's relationship with particular effectiveness. The contrast between *sene* and *puellam* emphasises the already clear difference in age between the perpetually young Aurora and her aged husband. The phrase *non puduit*, in the context of a relationship between an elderly man and a younger woman, recalls Tibullus's description of the elderly lover who was not ashamed to act in embarrassing ways in pursuit of his beloved (1.2.93-4). The situation here, though, is reversed, and it is the younger party who is besotted enough not to let shame get in her way. Since shamelessness for the sake of love (in the young, at least) is an elegiac virtue,<sup>99</sup> this difference changes the scene from ridiculous and pathetic to laudable and endearing; hence the admiring tone of the

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<sup>98</sup> On this trope of comedy, see above, pg.128 n.8, pg. 134 n.27.

<sup>99</sup> See above, pg. 134-6.

phrase *talem puellam*.

The image of Aurora kissing Tithonus's white hair (2.18.18) is particularly rich in significance. First, it recalls Propertius's own hypothetical grey hair, in line 5, reminding us of the context of the *exemplum*, and reinforcing the contrast between his own situation and Tithonus's – and between Cynthia's behaviour and Aurora's – before this contrast is made explicit in the next line (*at tu etiam iuuenem odisti me, perfida*, 2.18.19). Second, it increases the force both of this following line, and of what precedes. As is made clear throughout the passage, Aurora is not just unashamed of showing affection to her old husband, but rejoices in it; the image of her kissing his white hair is the visual representation of the central idea that she loves him age and all, rather than loving him in spite of his age. Hubbard (1986: 299) sees Aurora's behaviour towards Tithonus as a 'benign deception', explaining that she 'gives all the visible and outward signs of loving him as if still a young man', but does so only out of kindness, or a sense of duty. There is nothing in the passage to suggest that Aurora is carrying on any such deception, however. On the contrary, the whole point of the *exemplum* is the extraordinary nature of the fact that she genuinely still loves Tithonus, with the ideal combination of the passion appropriate to her youth and the devotion appropriate to his old age. The former is manifested in her frustration at being separated from her husband even briefly each day (2.18.13-14, 11-12), and the strength of the *gaudia* she finds in Tithonus's company (2.18.15-16); the latter, in her dutiful and wifely conduct (2.18.9-10),<sup>100</sup> and the constancy of her affection, regardless of what would, by most (though clearly not by her) be considered Tithonus's loss of physical attractiveness (2.18.17-18). Her kissing his white hair

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<sup>100</sup> I read *undis* (favoured by Heyworth) rather than *ulnis*, which most other editors (including Rothstein, Barber, Camps, and Richardson) favour on the basis of the oddness of the image that *undis* conjures (e.g. Camps 1967: *ad loc.*: 'that Aurora bathed her husband before her horses would be an odd if touching observation'). The image becomes less odd (but remains touching) if one sees an allusion here to Athena washing down her own horses before washing herself, at Callim. *Hymn* 5.5-6; see Pinotti 1996: 122-7. As she explains (1996: 125), the phrase *fouit in undis* recalls descriptions of therapeutic warm baths in medical contexts, and so is particularly appropriate in this description of Aurora tending to her aged husband; the Eastern waters of Ocean, by which Aurora lives (*suis undis*), are fitted to the purpose, being warm. The physical warming that the verb implies also has erotic connotations in the context; compare Tib. 1.6.5-6 (*iam Delia furtim / nescio quem tacita callida nocte fouet*), and especially 1.8.29-30 (*det munera canus amator; / ut foueat molli frigida membra sinu*).

encapsulates all of this in a single image. Not enough of the incongruity of a young woman being passionately in love with an old man remains for this to become a humorous picture, except in a very mild way, making it charming but not ridiculous. However, enough of the image's incongruity does remain to render it a surprising one. It is especially so in the context of other versions of the story: Aurora is generally depicted as losing interest in Tithonus once he ages.<sup>101</sup> The fact that the feelings and conduct of Propertius's Aurora have instead been turned into those of an exemplary elegiac lover reinforces the message to Cynthia. First of all, as he points out (2.18.19), Propertius is still young: for a young woman to fall short of Aurora's level of affection for an extremely old man would be quite ordinary, but to fail to live up to the elegiac ideal Aurora represents although her lover is still young is made to reflect badly on Cynthia. And if she does not even show Propertius any youthful, passionate love while he is young and attractive, she has no chance of showing him mature, devoted love – not now, and certainly not when he is old and grey.<sup>102</sup> The answer to the question in lines 5-6 thus far seems bleak.

The final couplet, *at tu etiam iuuenem odisti me, perfida, cum sis / ipsa anus haud longa curua futura die* (2.18.19-20), makes a last attempt at altering this state of affairs, combining an implied threat with an implied offer. The threat of pathetic loneliness in old age, when her charms will have faded, is a standard means of encouraging a woman to be more accommodating.<sup>103</sup> The description of Cynthia's future state as a bent old woman (*anus . . . curua*, 2.18.20), though brief, contributes to the force of this threatening aspect of the message, in that *anus* is almost always a more insulting term than the neutral word *senex*,

<sup>101</sup> See Hom. *Hymn* 5.218-38 (in which Eos stops sleeping with Tithonus as soon as he starts to go grey, and abandons him completely once he becomes decrepit). Mimnermus fr.4 (West), calling Tithonus's old age an evil, seems to allude to this less cosy version of the story, or at least to suggest that there is no pleasant aspect to Tithonus's existence; see also Sappho fr. 58.19-22 (L-P). Ovid also has Aurora lose interest in Tithonus, at *Am.* 1.13.35-40 and *Her.* 4.93-6. For a brief history of literary references to Tithonus, which stresses the uniqueness of Propertius's version, see Smith 1981: 82-6; he suggests (134 n.111) that Propertius 'may have wished to be seen as (brilliantly) combining the tradition of Tithonus' tragic aging with another (assumed by the poets of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*) in which he is simply the present lover of the Dawn-Goddess'.

<sup>102</sup> Or when she is, for that matter; compare 2.13.39-40 and 2.16.23-4, discussed above.

<sup>103</sup> See above, pg. 140-5, on Tib. 1.6 and 1.8, and pg. 128 n.8.

used to describe Tithonus (2.18.15, 17).<sup>104</sup> A bent posture likewise has more specifically negative connotations than grey hair,<sup>105</sup> which is, significantly, the only one of Tithonus's physical attributes to be mentioned (2.18.18). An old woman was already considered less attractive than an old man,<sup>106</sup> and the phrase reinforces the effect of this double standard by implying not only that Cynthia will not be young forever (as Aurora will), but that, in her old age, she will be an even less likely object of affection than Tithonus, who is described in only the blandest and vaguest terms. These associations help the couplet to make its point, but it remains very brief and quite gentle in comparison to other threats and curses along the same lines (Tib. 1.8.39-48; Prop. 3.25.11-18). This leaves room for a further implication, which makes the message distinctive from that of similar threats; it is admittedly not expressed directly, but is, I would argue, planted by the immediately preceding *exemplum*. Aurora has been depicted as an ideal elegiac lover, lamenting her separation from her beloved (2.18.13-14, 11-12), and putting her love for him over all other feelings (2.18.15-18). If this makes her not only an *exemplum* for Cynthia, but an analogue for Propertius, the implication is that his love for Cynthia would be such as to continue into her old age, like Aurora's for Tithonus, if given the chance. It is not unusual for Propertius to put himself in the female role in *exempla* in this way, or, for that matter, to change the identifications of the figures in them having once established them.<sup>107</sup> The exceptional nature of Aurora's devotion makes the comparison pointed: if Cynthia rejects Propertius, she will end up old and alone, since it will be difficult to find another who loves her as he does. But, she can avoid this fate by reciprocating his affection: if she will start acting like Aurora now, while he is young, he will continue to do so

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<sup>104</sup> On the negative connotations of *anus*, compared to the wider range of meaning and neutral tone of *senex*, see Rosivach 1994, especially 107, 109-15. On the tone of these and other words for the old as used by Tibullus, see Évrard 1978.

<sup>105</sup> A bent posture, like trembling (on which, see above, pg. 130-1, 138), is symbolic of the other weaknesses and debilities of old age, and of the negative face of old age (*curua senectus*) in general; see Parkin 2003: 255.

<sup>106</sup> See Richlin 1984: 69-72; Parkin 2003: 86-7; Cokayne 2003: 140-4. This idea is not restricted to satire and invective; consider pseudo-Quintilian's statement that women age faster than men, and that an old wife is loved only in memory of her past attractiveness (*Declam.* 306.20).

<sup>107</sup> See for example, on Prop. 1.15, Flaschenriem 1998: 52, and above, pg. 27-8.

in the future, when she is old.

Given the theme of poetry and poetic immortality that recurs in most of Propertius's other mentions of grey hair, it is perhaps also worth mentioning that in some versions of the story Tithonus ends up being turned into a cicada; Callimachus alludes to this escape from old age into eternal song at *Aet. fr.* 1.31-8 (Pfeiffer), implicitly contrasting the fickle Eos with the more constant Muses, who, he asserts, do not reject in old age those whom they have favoured in youth.<sup>108</sup> There is no direct allusion to this aspect of the story or to this passage from Callimachus in 2.18.5-20, but it is worth bearing in mind that Propertius may again, on some level, be suggesting poetic immortality for himself (as poet) and Cynthia (as subject), this time as a kind of escape from old age for them both, should she choose to act less like the traditional Eos, and more like Propertius's Aurora – or Callimachus's Muses.<sup>109</sup>

Propertius's use of the image of grey and greying hair, then, differs substantially from Tibullus's, though both engage its traditional, mainstream associations – with the loss of youthful love on the one hand, and the development of a more stable, faithful love on the other – and suit them to their own elegiac purposes. Propertius leans much further towards the positive connotations of grey hair; 2.18.5-6 is the only point at which he clearly alludes to greying as a sign of the loss of attractiveness,<sup>110</sup> and, as we have seen, this introduces a lengthy *exemplum* proving that in an ideal situation such considerations should be irrelevant. The subtle and complex implications that Tibullus draws from the image depend on tensions between the positive and negative associations of grey hair from poem to poem. Propertius, focusing on the positive associations of the image, and leaving other signs of age to represent its negative face, achieves similar subtlety and complexity by different means, calling up various aspects of the idea of longevity – the lover's hopes for the future versus the poet's;

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<sup>108</sup> On the cicada as symbol of poetic immortality, and Callimachus's and others' allusions to this aspect of the Tithonus story, see Crane 1986; King 1989: 73-7; Rawles 2006: 5-7.

<sup>109</sup> She is, after all, elsewhere presented as Propertius's personal Muse; see above, pg. 35-9, on 2.1.

<sup>110</sup> On the doubtful legitimacy of 3.25.13-14, see above, pg. 152-3.

the changing nature of a relationship over time; the different priorities of the young and the old – and examining their implications for his speaker, as his attitudes to these issues change and develop.

### Part 3: Age and Grey Hair in Ovid

Ovid's treatment of the motif of love in old age in the *Amores* reflects the differences between the model of elegiac love he presents and those presented by his predecessors. His lover-persona, as we have seen with regard to his treatment of *cultus*, is less concerned with deep emotional engagement, eternal devotion, or wifely fidelity on the part of his mistress, and more with present enjoyment. We thus see no images of Ovid and Corinna growing old and grey together, on the pattern of Tib. 1.6.85-6, or Prop. 1.8.45-6. On the few occasions when old age does come up, it is presented as negative or (on one occasion only) as positive in practical terms rather than emotional or symbolic ones.<sup>111</sup> Mention of grey hair is rare, occurring only in *Am.* 1.8 – Ovid's version of the scene which Propertius had depicted in 4.5, of the *lena* advising her charge – and it straightforwardly suggests unattractiveness. Ovid's Dipsas, like Propertius's Acanthis, warns her pupil not to be too discriminating in youth, since old age will one day make it impossible to attract lovers (Prop. 4.5.59-62; Ov. *Am.* 1.8.49-54). Acanthis makes no reference to her pupil's future grey hair; neither does Dipsas, directly, but her phrasing does evoke the image, as she likens aging to the decay of the roofing-tiles on an abandoned building (*canescunt turpi tecta relictā situ*, 1.8.52).<sup>112</sup> The unpleasantness of the *lena* herself, meanwhile, is also underlined by her white and thinning hair (*albam raramque comam*, 1.8.111) – compare Acanthis's, which is thin, but not described as white (4.5.71). Rather than alluding to and manipulating any of the complex and often richly symbolic uses of grey hair in Tibullus or Propertius, then, Ovid relegates the

<sup>111</sup> On the absence of old age and aging from the *Amores*, see de Luce 1989: 198-9.

<sup>112</sup> On *canus* and its cognates as hair-colour words first and foremost, see above, pg. 127 n.1.

image to a scenario in which old age plays a stereotypical role (in rhetoric voiced by a stereotyped elderly character),<sup>113</sup> and only the most basic negative connotations of grey hair are called upon. As for opinions voiced by Ovid's own lover-poet persona, these too conform in an uncomplicated way to traditional ideas about love and sex in old age. In his comparison of love and warfare, he flatly states that the idea of love in old age is a distasteful one (*quae bello est habilis, Veneri quoque conuenit aetas: / turpe senex miles, turpe senilis amor*, 1.9.3-4), and in another poem he associates old age with impotence (3.7.17-20). His only positive reference to the subject in the *Amores* comes when he briefly compares the appeal of a younger mistress with an older one; in 2.4, the poem in which he describes his total susceptibility, he claims to be attracted to young and old, but for different reasons: the former for their beauty, the latter for their 'ways' (*me noua sollicitat, me tangit serior aetas: / haec melior specie, moribus illa placet*, 2.4.45-6).<sup>114</sup> The word *mores* may evoke the greater steadiness and reliability of a mature mistress, but is vague enough to allow the lascivious tone of the poem as a whole to override this idea with the assumption that Ovid is in fact referring to older women's greater sexual experience.<sup>115</sup> The sentiment is an irreverent one, and alien to the various conceptions of love in old age we have seen in Propertius and Tibullus (and in the culture at large), but, given the poem's rapid-fire list format, its possibilities are left undeveloped.

This last passage, from *Am.* 2.4, gives only a hint of the similarly irreverent but much more extensive and complex treatment that the theme of love in old age receives in the *Ars Amatoria*.<sup>116</sup> With this fuller treatment of the subject come references to grey hair that are

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<sup>113</sup> See Myers 1996.

<sup>114</sup> I here follow the reading of this line preferred by Kenney and McKeown. Bornecque, Brandt, and Ramírez de Verger print an alternative reading, *haec melior specie corporis, illa sapit*; with either text, though, the (double) meaning of the line remains essentially the same.

<sup>115</sup> In the abstract sense of 'influence', *sollicitat* and *tangit* mean essentially the same thing (*OLD*, *s. u. sollicito*, 5a; *tango*, 8), but Ovid's choice of words here perhaps also supports the joke in the following line: the beauty of younger women arouses him (*s. u. sollicito*, 4a-b), but older women are more likely to actually grant him favours (*s. u. tango*, 4b).

<sup>116</sup> On the greater (and different) role of greying imagery in Ovid's exile poetry, see below, pg. 241-3.

more subtly allusive and broader in their implications than the rare and brief uses of the image in the *Amores*. Three interrelated mentions of grey hair in the *Ars Amatoria* are of particular interest, occurring in passages in which Ovid, in the persona of the ‘older, wiser’ *praeceptor amoris*, gives his pupils advice related to love and old age. All three rely for their effect on the same societal perception of old age and grey hair as incompatible with sexuality and attractiveness that Tibullus and Propertius tap into, while ignoring the positive associations of devotion and fidelity that the earlier elegists (Propertius in particular) rely on to complicate and deepen their treatments of the subject. In the *Ars*, though, the remarks’ immediate contexts, the precise terms in which Ovid expresses them, and the ways in which they engage both with each other and with the societal and poetic conventions which they both allude to and subvert, make them more complex than they appear at face value, and in isolation.

For the first passage, in which Ovid warns men not to rely only on their short-lived physical attractiveness, but to cultivate charm and sophistication, the specific imagery used to introduce the idea of grey hair and wrinkles robbing a man of his good looks is the key to its interpretation:

*nec uiolae semper nec hiantia lilia florent,  
et riget amissa spina relictæ rosa:  
et tibi iam uenient cani, formose, capilli;  
iam uenient rugae, quae tibi corpus arent.* (2.115-18)

As Sharrock describes (1994: 27-50, especially 41-7), Ovid is addressing his pupils as though they were the ones being seduced, rather than learning to seduce: such threats of and/or laments over the loss of beauty that comes with age are normally addressed to women or boys. The imagery Ovid uses further suggests allusion to such addresses: flower metaphors are generally applied to women and boys, rather than to grown men.<sup>117</sup> There are more

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<sup>117</sup> For boys compared to flowers, see for example *Anth. Pal.* 12.256 (Meleager), in which violets, lilies, and roses are the first three flowers named; Ach. Tat. 2.36.2. Catullus, at 11.21-4, makes different use of the same incongruous application of flower imagery to the male partner in a heterosexual relationship.

specific ill matches between tenor and vehicle in the comparison as well. Lilies, for example, are proverbially white, making them a poor parallel for the dark hair of youth if, as in this passage, it is being contrasted with the white hair of old age. The thorns left behind by a fallen rose, meanwhile, are much more apt (and common) as a metaphor for the beards and body hair of boys who are losing their attractiveness as they grow into men than for white hair and wrinkles.<sup>118</sup> Sharrock sees this playful characterisation of his pupils as passive objects of desire as part of Ovid's poetic 'seduction' of both them and his readers – in teaching them to catch and keep girls, his poem catches and keeps them in their turn – and this interpretation seems justified. The use of language and imagery associated with boys' and women's loss of youthful beauty, though, does more than suggest an equation between Ovid's present addressees and the people at whom such persuasive tactics are usually directed. It also emphasises the difference between the context in which those tactics usually appear – that is, persuasions to love before it is too late – and the present context: a persuasion to learn arts that will ensure that it never will be too late. Especially coming after a rejection of magic spells as a means of achieving and hanging onto love (2.99-106), the contrast implies that the power of the arts in which Ovid is to instruct his pupils is practically supernatural, or indeed better than supernatural. It cannot prevent the loss of beauty with age<sup>119</sup> – his pupils will still go grey – but it can prevent the loss of sexual attractiveness that is, in the kind of passages to which Ovid alludes by comparing his pupils to women and boys, necessarily linked with age. Properly applied, Ovid's *ars* can delay or even prevent that which is usually depicted as inevitable.

This idea, of *ars* having the ability to dissociate old age and the loss of beauty from loss of sexual attractiveness, and thus to rewrite both social and poetic conventions, is developed more explicitly later in the book, from the opposite angle. Again, Ovid uses

<sup>118</sup> For the image of thorns in descriptions of boys starting to grow beards and body hair, see *Anth. Pal.* 12.40.3-4 (Anon.); 12.195, 215 (Strato); 5.28.6 (Rufinus). Compare also Hor. *Carm.* 4.10.4-5.

<sup>119</sup> For men, at least; on artificial means of preserving women's beauty in the *Ars*, see above, pg. 78-80.

language and imagery usually associated with warnings and threats of the inevitable loss of beauty – youth as a bloom, and as the better period of one’s life; the plucking of white hairs in an attempt to deny one’s age – in a context that alters and plays with the usual implications of that imagery. This time, it comes in the course of a warning to Ovid’s male pupils not to ask a woman how old she is (2.663-4), especially if she is past her prime (*praecipue si flore caret meliusque peractum / tempus et albentes iam legit illa comas*, 2.665-6). In a reversal of the context and tone of the persuasive or vindictive passages in which such imagery is generally used,<sup>120</sup> with their focus on counteracting aloof women’s pride in their appearance, and instilling fear of age, the speaker here acknowledges women’s present fear of unattractiveness, and encourages his pupils *not* to remind them of it. The passage follows an encouragement to overlook what might at first appear to be women’s flaws, and a list of ways in which these can be spun into compliments, through the power of carefully chosen words (2.641-62). On one level, then, by suggesting that older women, despite their own fears about their appearance, are in fact valid targets for seduction (whatever the passages he is alluding to might suggest), and going on to extol the benefits of carrying on affairs with them, Ovid is putting his own advice into practice. He is choosing one example of a flaw that can be turned into a benefit if correctly viewed, and spinning it out into a full argument.

Choosing old age as the flaw to expand upon and turn into a positive trait, though, also makes for specific resonances with and subversion of elegiac precedent, since the advantages that Ovid ascribes to affairs with older women reverse almost all the associations of love in old age, positive and negative, that we have seen applied to it by Propertius and Tibullus. His argument basically consists of an expansion of his brief endorsement of older women’s winning ‘ways’ at *Am.* 2.4.45-6, the irreverence of which is here magnified both by

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<sup>120</sup> For the plucking of white hairs as a misguided attempt to delay the inevitable, see above pg. 140-2, on Tib. 1.8.45-6. Compare Macr. *Sat.* 2.5.7; Phaedrus 2.2.3-4.

the extension of one vaguely suggestive couplet to a full persuasive essay (2.667-702),<sup>121</sup> and by the fact that he has turned an equation into a hierarchy: older women are now described as *better* mistresses than young ones. This, he argues, is because they have more experience in bed (2.675-6, 679-80) and enjoy sex more, which, in turn, makes their lovers enjoy it more (2.681-94). Any loss of beauty their age has produced, meanwhile, is hidden by their own concealment of their flaws (2.677-8) – already alluded to in the plucking of white hairs, presented with such a surprisingly neutral tone at 2.666 – and so it is not a problem. Ovid's approach here has much in common with that seen in his advice on women's hairstyles.<sup>122</sup> As he does there, he here goes against both societal conventions and poetic precedent, and appeals only to the practical benefits for his pupils' sex lives of following his advice, divorcing these benefits both from the popular morality that associated passionate affairs with the young and dignified abstinence (or placid lack of interest) with the old, and from the romanticised ideals of his elegiac predecessors, who toy with the idea of love affairs lasting into old age, but never get more explicit than Propertius's description of Aurora bathing and sleeping with the white-haired Tithonus (2.18.9-10, 17-18).<sup>123</sup> Ovid's approving attitude towards sex with older women is perhaps not as daring in terms of contemporary politics as his attitude towards *cultus*, unless perhaps we associate it with stereotypes about merry widows (the widows of citizens being a group protected under the *lex Iulia*),<sup>124</sup> but it must still have been striking, especially to any reader expecting his advice to tally with earlier elegy. As we have seen, the *praeceptor*'s casual acceptance of artificial means of hiding grey hair and prolonging beauty, and his suggestion that their results have no qualitative difference

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<sup>121</sup> Kenney brackets lines 2.669-74 as an interpolation, and I am inclined to agree; though the lines refer to old age, they seem alien to the immediate context. For a summary of editors' approaches to the passage, see Ramírez de Verger 2003: *ad loc.*

<sup>122</sup> On which see above, pg. 68-81.

<sup>123</sup> Note also that, in the pairing of Aurora and Tithonus, it is the woman who is youthful and the man who is old; this is easier to romanticise than the scenario of a young man making love to an older woman that Ovid presents. On the relative attractiveness of old men and old women, and this double standard in the perception of mismatched relationships, see above, n.104, 106.

<sup>124</sup> On widows' relative independence and freedom of movement, and the resulting stereotype of their liberal conduct, see Walcot 1991: 9-21; McGinn 2008: 30-4.

from ‘the real thing’ (2.666, 677-8), contrasts strongly with Tibullus’s depiction of the same actions, at 1.8.41-6. There is also no suggestion here, despite the pro-age message of the passage, of the long-term devotion and faithfulness that grey-haired old age often symbolises in Propertius (1.8.45-6; 2.13.39-40; 2.16.22-3) and Tibullus (1.6.85-6; 1.10.39-44; 2.2.17-20). Ovid instead bases his assessment of older women as better mistresses than younger ones on the greater physical satisfaction to be gained from sleeping with them: an idea contrary to the cold and/or sluggish image of old age presented at Tib. 1.1.71-2, 1.2.89-96, and 1.8.29-30, 41-2, all of which passages use grey hair as a visual cue to suggest such physical decline.

The *praeceptor*’s focus on older women’s pleasure, and his insistence on the importance of mutual satisfaction (2.681-92), are particularly significant in the context of, for example, Tibullus’s picture of Pholoe’s loveless future (1.8.39-48). In that scene, as in other passages in which the possibility of attractiveness in old age is denied, sex appeal is inextricably linked with youthful beauty, but neither has any necessary connection with one’s own desire: Pholoe’s predicament is pathetic precisely because she has lost her beauty and her attractiveness, but not her desire. In the *praeceptor*’s different conception of things, it is women’s own desire and enjoyment that is the main source of their appeal as sexual partners. As a result, youthful beauty (which can, in any case, be faked) loses its importance, and the whole basis for attitudes to love in old age such as those presented at Tib. 1.1, 1.2, and 1.8 is upset. This reversal and subversion of practically every idea about love in old age presented by Tibullus and Propertius supports the idea of the preceding passage (2.641-62), demonstrating Ovid’s own mastery of the art he has just advocated, of learning to find traits attractive that one might otherwise have found unattractive, through positive thinking and the power of words. As at *Ars* 2.115ff., *ars* is presented as the means by which what is elsewhere depicted as a basic truth is overturned, not only by the older women themselves, whose experience makes them *artifices* (2.675-6), but by the poet.

Ovid's play with and manipulation of the topos of the threat of old age as a spur to love continues in the book of the *Ars* addressed to women. At 3.59-82, in an apparent reversion to the poetic conventions related to age, after his deviations from them in book two, he urges his female pupils to take lovers before they get too old. Once again he alludes to lovers' own attempts at persuasion, and indeed to scenes of *lenae* instructing their protégées,<sup>125</sup> presenting his pupils with a picture of how they will one day lose their beauty, and wish for their youth back again:

*quam cito, me miserum, laxantur corpora rugis  
et perit in nitido qui fuit ore color,  
quasque fuisse tibi canas a uirgine iures  
sparguntur subito per caput omne comae!* (3.73-6)

This is not quite the usual picture of the elderly woman trying to hold on to her past attractiveness, however. The means of denying and hiding their age that the *praeceptor* has his pupils imagine themselves employing is not a common or conventional one in literature.<sup>126</sup> It is also particularly misguided, and doomed to fail; claiming that individual white hairs have been there since one's girlhood may work for a while, but, as Ovid emphasises, it is at best a temporary measure. And it does nothing to change one's appearance, unlike the similarly short-lived solution of pulling out the offending hairs – one of the options that Tibullus pictures Pholoe employing (Tib. 1.8.45), and the one that Ovid himself mentions at 2.666. Other more effective options, such as hair dye and wigs, are also suppressed, though these are mainstays of descriptions of the denial of age. In part, this maintains continuity. Ovid has already alluded to artful methods of hiding one's age, at 2.677-8 (the use of makeup, dye, and wigs, presumably), and claimed that they are perfectly effective, and he is to reiterate this idea later in book three (3.159-68);<sup>127</sup> it would, then, be transparently hypocritical to claim here that they are ineffective. But the choice of so

<sup>125</sup> On Ovid as *lena*, see Gibson 2003: 19-21.

<sup>126</sup> See Gibson 2003: *ad* 3.75-6.

<sup>127</sup> Note that the loss of a youthful complexion, with which Ovid threatens the *puellae* (3.74), is later depicted as equally remediable (3.199-208).

misguided a tactic as simply denying the source of one's grey hairs also suggests the natural ineptitude of Ovid's pupils. The *praeceptor's* perception of a need to instruct his pupils in the basic principles of *cultus* is a running joke in the *Ars*,<sup>128</sup> and something similar is perhaps going on here; he patronisingly implies that a lame excuse for their white hairs is the best that his pupils, as yet untaught in the amatory arts, would be able to come up with on their own. We should perhaps also consider, however, that the reader of *Ars* 2.667-702 will in any case know that Ovid's male pupils – the ones against whom Ovid claims to be 'arming' his female pupils (3.1-6) – have already been taught to consider young and old equally fair game, and to look beyond grey hairs to the practical advantages to be gained from taking an older mistress, making the threat of age and loss of beauty irrelevant. The fictional female audience of book three have heard the advice the *praeceptor* gave to men in books one and two (and on the off-chance that they haven't, he advises them to read it, at 3.341-2); they know that the whole game of love and persuasion is one of artifice and strategy on both sides – of deciding when to pretend to have been convinced, rather than of genuinely weighing the value of the points being argued. We should, then, also consider the possibility that the *praeceptor's* version of the threat of old age as a spur to love is self-consciously artificial and halfhearted – that it toys with the idea of its addressees' naïveté, but, on another level, acknowledges their experience, and collusion in the joke. He gives them the opportunity to play coy, in the full understanding that, since they do not actually need persuading, transparently biased and self-consciously rhetorical persuasion will work just as well as perfectly reasoned logic.

Each of the three mentions of grey hair in the *Ars Amatoria*, then, in its own way, alludes to but subverts the topos of the threat of old age as a spur to love, and, in the process, suggests not only the artificiality of societal and poetic conventions relating to beauty, love, and sex in old age, but the power of *ars* – especially Ovid's own – to overturn them. He has

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<sup>128</sup> See Gibson 1998: 298-300.

some fun at the expense of his male addressees by characterising them as the seduced rather than as seducers at 2.115-18, but in doing so, also points out the power, longevity, and even masculinity of attractiveness through *ars* as contrasted with attractiveness through natural beauty. He proves his own point on two different levels at 2.663-702, demonstrating through his own persuasive technique, entirely against the trend of popular thought and poetic precedent, that women's own skill and experience conceals, outweighs, and negates any loss of beauty that age may produce. In a final turn, in his address on the subject to his female pupils (3.73-6), he shows the reader of book two the workings of his own deceptiveness, in arguing the other side of the debate when it suits him, and doing so in such a way as to acknowledge that this is all a rhetorical exercise in any case.

## Chapter 4: Disorder and Dishevelment

### Introduction

Of all the hair-related images in elegy, the most frequently occurring, and the richest in its variety of implications, is that of loose or dishevelled hair. Loose hair, whether simply flowing free, or tangled and dishevelled, had a number of different connotations in antiquity, varying according to context, and this is reflected in the varied use of the image in literature. In day-to-day life, women's<sup>1</sup> hair would ordinarily be styled and bound up; it was loosed in public only under special circumstances, such as religious rituals or funerals.<sup>2</sup> This, in itself, will have given the image an air of significance. The more complicated hairstyles fashionable in the late Republic and throughout the Imperial period would have been difficult enough to undo and redo that, even in private contexts, some women must have let their hair down only every few days.<sup>3</sup> The rarity of seeing the women outside of one's own household with their hair loose, combined with the intimacy of some of the contexts in which it might be seen, makes it almost akin to nudity in its connotative value: a woman with her hair down is in a state of partial undress. This is one reason for the eroticism of many images of loose hair, the most cited example of which is Lucius's admiration of Photis's loose hairstyle, in Apuleius's *Metamorphoses*, and his request that she let her hair down while they make love (2.8.2; 2.9.1-3; 2.16.5).<sup>4</sup> Letting one's hair down represents the removal of inhibitions and societal restraints. It can thus also be associated with madness and frenzy, especially of a

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<sup>1</sup> The focus in this chapter will be mostly on women's hair, since men generally wore their hair very short throughout the period in question, but the long hair of boys and of 'young' gods such as Apollo will also be touched on.

<sup>2</sup> It seems that even young girls usually had their hair bound in plaited styles (or, often, in the so-called *Melonenfrisur*) rather than left loose; see Kleiner 1977: 136-7; Sensi 1981: 56; Sebesta 1994: 47-8. On loose hair in Greek and Roman religion, see Cosgrove 2005: 679-81; Santucci 2011: 84-5.

<sup>3</sup> See above, pg. 23, n.27. Note that, at Prop. 1.15.5, Cynthia is blamed for excessive vanity even while wearing yesterday's hairstyle (*hesternos. . . crines*).

<sup>4</sup> On hair in Apuleius, see Englert & Long 1973; Duret 2008. Compare Circe's loose hair at Petr. *Sat.* 126. On a similar 'over-determination' of loose hair as erotic attractant and symbol of sexuality in other cultures in which the hair is usually bound or covered, see Olivelle 1998: 16-17 (India); Ofek 2009: 1-4 (Victorian England); Rifelj 2010: 63-4, 88-99 (nineteenth century France); and the sources on headscarves in Iranian and Turkish culture cited above, pg. 11, n.28.

divine or magical kind; consider the associations between hair and magic noted in the introductory chapter.<sup>5</sup> Bacchantes, witches, and sibyls possessed by the god are thus generally depicted as letting their hair flow loosely and become dishevelled.<sup>6</sup> In more everyday contexts, as the opposite of the elaborate styles discussed above in the chapter on *cultus*, with their associations of luxury and self-interest, leaving one's hair loose and unkempt can suggest virtuous self-denial. But it can also become a pathetic image; because aesthetic concerns are overshadowed by danger, misfortune, or other serious preoccupations, dishevelment often accompanies unfortunate circumstances, thus increasing the pathos of those suffering them.<sup>7</sup> Hence also the persistence throughout antiquity of the loosing, tearing, and/or dirtying of the hair as a traditional act of mourning; these gestures, alongside other symbolic acts of self-denial, such as face-scratching, tearing or dirtying the clothes, and baring and beating the breast, externalise the mourners' pain, and suggest the suspension of their normal lives and concerns in the face of their grief.<sup>8</sup>

The elegists' use of the image is informed by all of these connotations. They exploit the eroticism of loose hair, for example, in love scenes and other scenes taking place in the private sphere, in which the image contributes to a sense of intimacy, or, via its associations with wildness, suggests a lack of inhibition (Prop. 1.3.23-4; 2.29.15-18; Ov. *Am.* 1.5.9-10; 1.14.19-22; *Ars* 3.783-4). Despite the amatory focus of elegy, loose and dishevelled hair appears more frequently in scenes of pain, misfortune, and death (Tib. 1.9.13-16; 1.10.37-8;

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<sup>5</sup> See pg. 5, n.14.

<sup>6</sup> Eur. *Bacch.* 695; Catull. 64.390-1; Ov. *Rem.* 593-4; *Fast.* 4.457-8; 6.513-14; Juv. 6.316-17; Hor. *Sat.* 1.8.23-4; *Epod.* 5.15-16; Petr. *Sat.* 133; Tib. 2.5.65-6; Lucan, *Bell. Ciu.* 5.142-4; 6.518. See also Cosgrove 2005: 684-5; Santucci 2011: 81-4, and figs. V.5-6.

<sup>7</sup> According to Artemidorus (*Oneir.* 1.19, 22), dreaming of having unkempt hair is an omen of misfortune. Many of the suffering heroines in Ovid's *Heroides* describe themselves as dishevelled (e.g. 3.15; 7.69; 10.16, 47, 137, 147; 11.115-16); see Hälikkää 2001: 25-8, Hohenwallner 2001: 50-1. On dishevelment and pathos more generally, and for further examples, see Santucci 2011: 85-6.

<sup>8</sup> For examples, see below, n.75. Though men and women both engage in this behaviour in literature, especially if the action is set in a remote or mythical time period, in contemporary Roman practice it was particularly associated with women. On gendered mourning practices and their depiction in art and literature, see D'Ambrosio 1994; Corbeill 2004: 68-70, 75-7; Cosgrove 2005: 682-3; Hope 2009: 72-3, 95; Santucci 2011: 86-9.

Prop. 2.8.33-4; 2.26.4; 3.7.59-60; Ov. *Am.* 2.14.39-40). Such images of pathetic dishevelment are not always devoid of an erotic element, though. One sees, for example, images of the abandoned or rejected growing unkempt in their lamentation, or in service to a beloved (Prop. 1.15.9-14; 3.6.9-12; Tib. 1.3.91-2; 2.3.11-28). Ovid in particular often conjures up pictures of unkempt ‘damsels in distress’, whose dishevelment can be either pathetic or attractive, depending on whose perspective is prioritised (*Am.* 1.7.11-18; 1.9.37-8; 3.6.45-66, 71-2; *Ars* 1.525-64; 3.153-8). Descriptions of and allusions to scenes of mourning are common in elegy, and loose or torn hair frequently appears in them (Tib. 1.3.5-8; Prop. 2.15.45-6; Ov. *Am.* 3.9.3, 11, 51-2); the erotic appeal of loose hair can sometimes affect these scenes too, when the speaker imagines his mistress mourning his death (Prop. 1.17.19-24; 2.24.51-2; Tib. 1.1.67-8), or depicts other scenes of women mourning their lovers (Prop. 2.9.13-14; 2.13.56; 3.13.15-22). Ovid even presents humorous takes on hair-tearing in mourning, parodying both the pathetic funeral scene (*Am.* 2.6.3-6) and the eroticised funeral scene (*Ars* 3.431-2). As is clear even from this simple list of instances, the elegists take advantage of loose hair’s richness in implications, calling up its various connotations to suit different situations. The density of meaning that is so characteristic of the genre, though, is demonstrated more fully in the way in which they allow multiple connotations to interact within each image, subtly manipulating and interweaving familiar, contemporary imagery and symbolism with literary tropes and precedents.

### Part 1: The Eroticism of Loose Hair

As seen above, the erotic aspect of loose hair crops up in a variety of contexts in elegy, adding complexity to images of unkempt and distressed heroines, dishevelled mourners, and so on. Before moving on to those more multifaceted images of dishevelment, then, it will be useful to consider some uses of the image in which its eroticism is the primary

focus, as these are by no means simple in their handling, either. The plain visual appeal of loose hair often influences descriptive passages praising women's beauty. Consider, for example, the fact that even when describing styled hair, Propertius tends to single out an element of slight disorder or looseness (*seu uidi ad frontem sparsos errare capillos*, 2.1.7-8; *de more comae per leuia colla fluentes*, 2.3.13; *siue uagi crines puris in frontibus errant*, 2.22.9-10).<sup>9</sup> And when Ovid makes reference to the visual appeal of hairstyling (*at non pectendos coram praebere capillos, / ut iaceant fusi per tua terga, ueto*, *Ars* 3.235-6),<sup>10</sup> its attractiveness seems to lie largely in the fact that it involves the hair being let loose. Here, though, I shall be concentrating on passages in which the image, though in part inserted for the sake of its visual appeal, also plays a more central role in the action, and evokes wider implications.

Two examples from Propertius come in 1.3 and 2.29a,<sup>11</sup> poems that are similar in their basic outline, though very different in other respects: in both, Propertius stumbles home at night, drunk, while Cynthia waits faithfully for his return. In the former, he arrives home to find her asleep; though fascinated by her beauty (1.3.1-8), and goaded on by love and wine to make amatory advances (1.3.11-16), he is reluctant to wake her, for fear of her wrath (1.3.17-18). He thus abandons this plan, and limits himself to performing little acts of devotion to her as she sleeps (1.3.21-6): putting his garland on her head, arranging her hair (*et modo gaudebam lapsos formare capillos*, 1.3.23), and placing fruit on her. Though *lapsos capillos* could describe individual locks escaping from an otherwise orderly hairstyle, the comparisons of Cynthia to Ariadne, Andromeda, and especially to a Thracian Bacchante that open the poem (1.3.1-8) suggest that we are to imagine her hair as mostly or entirely loose and

<sup>9</sup> On Prop. 2.1.7-8 and 2.3.13, see above, pg. 37-8, 41-3.

<sup>10</sup> On this passage, see above, pg. 80-1.

<sup>11</sup> I follow the majority of editors in dividing '2.29' into two poems at line 22. See Butler & Barber 1933: 242; Enk 1962: 368-9; and Heyworth 2007: 238 for explanations.

disordered.<sup>12</sup> The image of Cynthia lying asleep and dishevelled performs one of its functions only on the level of implication, by extrapolation from the opening similes. Ariadne, Andromeda, and sleeping Bacchantes are generally depicted as dishevelled because they are in distress, in danger, and recovering from a state of frenzy, respectively. This piques the reader's (and presumably the drunk Propertius's) interest: which of these, if any, describes Cynthia's state of mind prior to sleep? The unclear relationship between tenor and vehicle in the similes creates an air of mystery.

At the point in the poem at which Cynthia's loose hair is explicitly mentioned and acted on within the narrative, though, its main role is to increase the atmosphere of intimacy, especially as we are presented with the picture of Propertius actually touching and rearranging it.<sup>13</sup> Despite the resulting sense of intimacy, though, Cynthia's passive stillness, combined with Propertius's awe of her, makes the description of his attentions reminiscent less of a love scene, and more of the decoration of statues on festive occasions, with garlands being placed on their heads, oil or wine being poured over their hair, and offerings of incense or fruit being made to them (Prop. 3.17.29-32; 4.2.41-6; Tib. 1.7.49-54; 2.2.5-8; Ov. *Fast.* 4.135-8). In her still and silent state, Cynthia has become an idol to be worshipped.<sup>14</sup> Greene (1995: 308) argues that this reinforces Cynthia's portrayal 'as a mannequin-like figure', and that, in tidying her hair, Propertius simply 'arranges her as an artist might a still-life', but this takes too little account of the tension and high emotion of the scene. By tidying Cynthia's hair, the speaker clearly feels that he is interacting with her on an intimate and tender level; note that, of his attentions, this is the one to which the strongest emotional force is attached (*gaudebam*, 1.3.23). Cynthia, being asleep, is unaware of the attentions paid to her (1.3.25),

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<sup>12</sup> See Curran 1966: 199, who also notes the disarranged clothes of these figures in Roman wall-paintings. On Ariadne, see above, pg. 25, n.33. For Andromeda depicted with her hair loose, see Ov. *Met.* 4.673; Manil. *Astron.* 5.557. For dishevelled Bacchantes, see above, n.6.

<sup>13</sup> On linguistic features that contribute to the 'prolonged sensuousness and infinite tenderness' of the scene, see Curran 1966: 201-2. See also Wlosok 1967: 344-5; Lyne 1970: 72-4.

<sup>14</sup> On Propertius's near-religious awe of Cynthia, see Hohenwallner 2001: 16.

and thus more impassive even than the gods in the passages cited above, who are imagined as happily receiving their gifts. But, unlike their statues, she is in fact alive and animate, and we are not allowed to forget this fact; the idea that she may wake at any moment is emphasised throughout.<sup>15</sup> The unusual degree of intimacy Propertius is enjoying is, then, at once dependent on Cynthia's remaining asleep (1.3.17-18), and made somewhat empty by her being asleep. The resulting paradox creates tension, and supports the unique tone of internal excitement contrasted with outward calm that characterises this middle phase of the poem.

The themes of intimacy and distance are played on in a more literal and humorous manner in Prop. 2.29a. Wandering drunkenly at night, Propertius is waylaid by a gang of Cupids, who apprehend him and take him back to Cynthia where he belongs.<sup>16</sup> Meanwhile, they berate him for looking for another woman (2.29.14) when Cynthia is waiting at home:

*quae, cum Sidoniae nocturna ligamina mitrae  
soluerit atque oculos mouerit illa graues,  
afflabunt tibi non Arabum de gramine odores,  
sed quos ipse suis fecit Amor manibus.* (2.29.15-18)

As in 1.3, Cynthia lets her hair down before going to bed, but we here get a picture of her in the process of doing so, rather than of the result. Her hair is not mentioned explicitly, but the untying of her *mitra* suggests a state of undress, and we are probably to imagine this as the prelude to her loosing her hair completely. Cynthia's *mitra*, its foreign nature emphasised by the epithet *Sidonia*, is suggestive of exoticism and Eastern luxury,<sup>17</sup> and this idea is played on in the next couplet: the scent that will waft over Propertius will not, as we might have

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<sup>15</sup> Emphasis is placed on her breathing (1.3.7), she is lying in an uncomfortable position (*non certis nixa caput manibus*, 1.3.8), the consequences of her waking up are stressed (1.3.17-18), she stirs and sighs (1.3.27-8), and, in the end, moonbeams are sufficient to wake her (1.3.31-3). On Cynthia as statue come to life, see Curran 1966: 195; Breed 2003.

<sup>16</sup> Cairns (1971a) argues (I think, rightly) that the Cupids are depicted as *fugitiuarii* (runaway slave hunters), here retrieving an escaped *seruus amoris*.

<sup>17</sup> Propertius often associates the *mitra* with Bacchus, or with the East generally; see Prop. 3.17.30; 4.2.31; 4.7.61-2. Varro notes the foreignness of the word and the item (*Ling.* 5.130). It is elsewhere common in descriptions of effeminate men or men in women's clothes, suggesting that it was associated with feminine (over-)adornment: see Cic. *De Har.* 44; Verg. *Aen.* 4.216 (where it is worn over hair anointed with perfumed oil); 9.616; Ov. *Her.* 9.66; [Sen.] *Herc. Oet.* 375; a *mitra* is also part of the elegant outfit that Ariadne sheds at Catull. 64.63. Probably because of these connotations of foreignness and luxury, it seems also to have been associated with courtesans and prostitutes; consider Juv. 3.66: *ite, quibus grata est picta lupa barbara mitra.*

expected, be that of Arabian spices, but that which Love makes with his own hands. The exact nature of this perfume is unclear. Interpretations of a parallel passage from Catullus, in which he tempts Fabullus with a similar divine perfume (*nam unguentum dabo, quod meae puellae / donarunt Veneres Cupidinesque*, 13.11-12) have ranged widely. Most relevant to the present discussion, though, are those put forward by Quinn (1973: *ad loc.*), who suggests that this a reference to ‘the alluring fragrance of [Lesbia’s] person’, and by Kilpatrick (1998), who, based on a parallel reference in Servius, favours the idea of an actual unguent, so seductive that it is imagined as having been given to Lesbia by Venus.<sup>18</sup> When it comes to the Propertian passage, Enk (1962: *ad loc.*) and Camps (1967: *ad loc.*) suggest interpretations something like Kilpatrick’s: Cynthia’s hair is oiled with perfume, and the removal of her *mitra* releases its scent, which is so lovely that it seems ‘divine’. However, this takes too little account of the contrast between foreign and natural implied by the statement that the scent released is *not* that of Arabian spices. I would instead suggest that the untying of Cynthia’s *Sidonia mitra* reveals one of Cynthia’s natural beauties: her hair’s own fragrance. This, the flattering metaphor suggests, is preferable to any manmade perfume.<sup>19</sup> The fragrance that Love himself has made would then essentially be Cynthia’s own ‘pheromones’ – an idea akin to Quinn’s interpretation of Catull. 13.11-12. Specifying that Cynthia is removing a head-dress, rather than simply letting down her hair, increases the vividness of the sense imagery; since it was usual for men and women alike to oil their hair with scented unguents, the removal of a turban-like covering resulting in scents wafting over those present (*afflabunt*, 2.29.17) is probably a highly realistic detail, and an evocative one for the

<sup>18</sup> For other interpretations, see Littman 1977; Hallett 1978; Witke 1980; Karakasis 2005: 105-13.

<sup>19</sup> See Lilja 1972: 77, 148. On natural and artificial beauty in Propertius, see above, pg. 17-21, 29-31. References to the pleasant fragrance of loved ones, or of beautiful individuals generally, are common in ancient literature: see Lilja 1972: 144-8; Synnott 1993: 199; Classen et al. 1994: 27-8, 37. For examples, see Aristoph. *Plut.* 1020; Xen. *Symp.* 2.3-4; Lucr. 4.1054; Mart. 3.65; 5.37; 11.8; Ach. Tat. 2.38.3; *Anth. Pal.* 5.13 (Philodemus); 5.18.3 (Rufinus); 5.18.5 (Rufinus); 5.197.2 (Meleager); 12.7 (Strato). On the sense of smell and its greater prominence in the culture and literature of pre-modern societies than in contemporary Western society, see Classen et al. 1994, especially 13-50; Mark 2011.

contemporary reader. The idea that in this case the perfume is not artificial, but Cynthia's own personal fragrance, intensifies the impression of intimacy already created by the bedtime setting, and the image of her stripping off her adornments. All this is titillating for the reader, but also reinforces the poem's light-heartedly conveyed but essentially serious message about the hold that Cynthia has over Propertius, suggesting that it is based on her unique, inherent attractiveness, rather than external trappings.

In these Propertian examples, then, the main effect achieved through the use of the imagery of loose hair is a sense of intimacy, which underpins the tension that characterises the middle section of 1.3, and, in 2.29a, strengthens the contrast between the appeal of the foreign and the natural. For Ovid, a similar sense of intimacy characterises mentions of loose hair in amorous contexts, but is overshadowed by another category of ideas implied by the same image: wildness and lack of inhibition. Take for example his description of Corinna lying with her hair spread over her couch at *Am.* 1.14.19-22.<sup>20</sup> The ostensible purpose of the passage is to praise the lost beauty of Corinna's hair, but the sexual element of its appeal is strongly emphasised. She is in a suggestively languorous pose (*semisupina*, 1.14.20), and looks like a Bacchante lying exhausted in the grass (1.14.21-2). The loose hair of Bacchantes suggests their wildness, freedom from social norms, and possession by the god; the image thus implies not simply a state of rest, but of rest after vigorous activity. In the context of Ovid's presence in her boudoir, we can safely assume what this has consisted of.<sup>21</sup> There is a parallel connection drawn between loose hair and wildness in an erotic context at *Ars* 3.783-4: in discussing which sexual positions are most flattering, Ovid tells his female pupils that they need not be ashamed to let their hair down (*nec tibi turpe puta crinem, ut Phylleia mater, / soluere, et effusis colla reflecte comis*). Why should his addressees be afraid that this might

<sup>20</sup> On this passage, see also above, pg. 62-3.

<sup>21</sup> See Hälikkää 2001: 30. It is perhaps also worth noting that *semisupina* seems to be a coinage of Ovid's, and that one of its only two other usages by him is in his description of a sexual position (*Ars* 3.787-8); see Gibson 2003, *ad loc.* See also Armstrong 2006: 227-8, on a reminiscence of *Am.* 1.14.19-22 at *Her.* 10.9-16, used to eroticise the dishevelled appearance of Ariadne.

be shameful or unattractive (*turpe* implies both), unless by association with the *Phylleia mater* that it imitates – that is, with Thracian Bacchantes again?<sup>22</sup> Ovid must be reassuring his pupils that though letting their hair down during sex may make them look a bit wild, this is not necessarily a bad thing.<sup>23</sup> The implication of enthusiastic lovemaking in the image of Corinna’s loose hair at *Am.* 1.14.19-22, though, does more than simply add some spice to the description; it is also a subtle barb. The elegy as a whole is a humorous lament for Corinna’s hair, damaged by excessive styling, and including this image among those of its lost beauties suggests that, now that Corinna’s hair is gone, she is unlikely to inspire such passion in Ovid again, until it grows back.

The lack of inhibition associated with loose hair is a more central element of *Amores* 1.5. As Ovid is lying in bed at noon, musing on the suitability of the room’s low lighting for shy girls (1.5.1-8), Corinna enters, in a state of partial undress:

*ecce, Corinna uenit tunica uelata recincta,  
candida diuidua colla tegente coma,  
qualiter in thalamos formosa Semiramis isse  
dicitur et multis Lais amata uiris.* (1.5.9-12)

The phrasing toys with the preceding description of modest girls wanting concealment: Corinna is ‘veiled’ by her tunic, and her neck ‘hidden’ by her hair. The looseness of both her clothes and her hair, though, suggest that she is no such modest girl,<sup>24</sup> and the similes that follow confirm this impression. Semiramis and Lais are both famous beauties,<sup>25</sup> and this is one basis for the comparison, but there is more to the similes than this, especially that of

<sup>22</sup> On the possible meanings of *Phylleia mater*, and the likelihood that it refers to Bacchantes, see Gibson 2003: *ad loc.*

<sup>23</sup> Interestingly, it is rare to see women depicted with their hair loose in the erotic art of the period; it is almost always tied back in a bun, or up in an ornate hairstyle. For examples drawn from a variety of contexts, see Clarke 1998: fig. 37-40, 49, 60, 63-4, 72-3, plates 6-9; see also Santucci 2011: 110. Compare the passage in the *Amores* at which tousled hair (*plus quam somno turbatos. . . capillos*, 3.14.33) is taken as a tell-tale sign of infidelity; the phrase probably suggests a mussed hairstyle, rather than completely loose and dishevelled hair, unless, like Propertius in 2.29b, Ovid has been surprising his mistress before she has gotten dressed in the morning.

<sup>24</sup> On the implications of moral ‘looseness’ in Corinna’s loose clothes and hair, see Frécaut 1968: 350; Barsby 1973: 67-9; Elliott 1979: 351; McKeown 1989: *ad loc.*; Fear 2000: 224-5; Hohenwallner 2001: 70.

<sup>25</sup> For Semiramis’s beauty, see Diod. Sic. 2.5.1-2. On Lais, see Athen. *Deipn.* 13.582c-d, 587e, 588c-589b; Prop. 2.6.1-2.

Semiramis, which, in this context, is far from the ‘tired cliché’ that Green labels it as (1982: 273). According to Valerius Maximus (9.3, ext. 4), Semiramis was said to have been told while she was having her hair dressed that the city was rebelling, and rushed out to suppress the revolt with her hair half down. He explains that this is why a sculpture of her at Babylon depicted her with her hair loose; if copies of this sculpture were known at Rome, Corinna’s loose hair may be a specific ground for visual comparison. In any case, Semiramis is not just another proverbial beauty, but a figure of female authority and lack of sexual inhibition; the detail that Corinna looks like Semiramis going to bed (*in thalamos*, 1.5.11) emphasises the latter.<sup>26</sup> The following comparison, to Lais, which puts her role as a courtesan front and centre (*multis Lais amata uiris*, 1.5.12), reinforces this impression. The description of Corinna’s parted hair lying on her white neck (1.5.10) also evokes depictions of Venus/Aphrodite in art and literature,<sup>27</sup> notably Apollonius Rhodius’s description of Aphrodite at her toilette (λευκοῖσιν δ’ ἐκάτερθε κόμας ἐπιειμένη ὄμοις . . . , *Argon.* 3.45-7). As Ficheux describes (2006), gemstones engraved with the image of Aphrodite displaying her loose and parted hair were used in love spells, because the image was symbolic of the power of beauty to draw in and ensnare lovers.<sup>28</sup> All these allusions and connotations combine to suggest Corinna’s forwardness and agency. She has undone her clothes and, like Cynthia in Prop. 1.3 and 2.29a, let her hair down to go to bed;<sup>29</sup> especially in 1.3, though, it is unclear whether Cynthia has let her hair down in the process of getting ready for a visit from Propertius, or, once disappointed by his failure to show up, she has let her hair down to go to sleep. Given that in *Am.* 1.5 Corinna has got ready for bed in the middle of the day

<sup>26</sup> See McKeown 1989: *ad loc.*; Greene 1999: 80-1; Armstrong 2005: 56-7. On Semiramis as imperious and lustful, taking multiple lovers and then killing them, see Diod. Sic. 2.13.4; one version of her story claimed she was an ex-courtesan (2.20.3-4). She is cited as an *exemplum* of feminine power at Prop. 3.11.21-6; Juv. 2.108; Suet. *Diu. Iul.* 22.3.

<sup>27</sup> On the scene as reminiscent of divine epiphanies, see Nicoll 1977; Hinds 1987: 9-11; Papanghelis 1989.

<sup>28</sup> As Ficheux explains (2006: 189), such images call on the symbolic association, observed in many cultures, between a middle parting and the vulva (cf. Hershman 1974: 281-2). Note that, in ancient Rome, men rarely wore a middle parting, though it was a common feature of feminine hairstyles; see Bartman 2001: 2.

<sup>29</sup> Ovid elsewhere uses the phrase *tunica uelata recincta* (*/soluta*) of women dressed for bed: *Am.* 3.1.51; 3.7.81; *Ars* 1.529 (on which see below, pg. 197-8); *Fast.* 3.645.

(*mediamque dies exegerat horam*, 1.5.1), and, it seems, come into Ovid's room rather than her own, her intentions in letting her hair down and loosing her clothes are clearer. Though her state of undress does communicate a sense of intimacy similar to that in 1.3 and 2.29a, then, its main role is to suggest Corinna's specifically amorous intent. This magnifies the effect of the famous defeat of expectation that ends the poem (1.5.23-6),<sup>30</sup> but it also has more far-reaching effects. Corinna is named for the first time at *Am.* 1.5.9, and this places the depiction of her not only as ready and willing, but as initiating a sexual encounter, into a conscious contrast with the first allusions to Cynthia, Delia, and Nemesis by name (*Prop.* 1.1.1; *Tib.* 1.1.57; 2.3.51), which occur in contexts stressing their failure fully to reciprocate the speaker's love.<sup>31</sup> Even without needing to call upon the idea of the *puella*'s body and *cultus* as a metaphor for elegy itself, then (though this, too, is at work here),<sup>32</sup> the initial description of Corinna in *Am.* 1.5 maintains Ovid's focus in the early part of book one on establishing the differences in tone and approach between the *Amores* and its predecessors.

## Part 2: The Pathos of Loose Hair

The use and role of images of loose hair in erotic contexts, discussed above, can inform our understanding of the other, broader main category of loose hair imagery in elegy: that of pathetic dishevelment, including scenes of the endangered and the dying, of corpses and shades, of abandoned or rejected lovers, and of mourners, which will occupy the rest of this chapter. Firstly, both because of the plain visual appeal of loose hair, and because of the further associations of intimacy and/or wildness and disinhibition that underpin that appeal, dishevelment can sometimes lend an erotic element even to scenes of pathetic dishevelment.

<sup>30</sup> For various takes on this defeat of expectation, see Connolly 2000: 85-6; Armstrong 2005: 58; Kennedy 2008: 26-7; Salzman-Mitchell 2008: 44-5.

<sup>31</sup> See Elliott 1979: 347; Fear 2000: 225, n.17; Armstrong 2005: 55-6. Hinds (1987: 6-9) also points out that the passage alludes back to the previous generation of love poets, via line 10's echo (*candida diuidua* . . .) of Catullus's description of his *candida diua* (68.70); on some of the effects of this allusion, see Buchan 1995: 67-8.

<sup>32</sup> See Keith 1994: 29-31; Fear 2000: 227.

It will, then, often be useful to keep in mind the associations laid out above when looking at such scenes. Secondly, even when they do not include the juxtaposition of such apparently disparate implications as unbridled sexuality and wretched mourning, scenes of pathetic dishevelment in elegy almost always incorporate a variety of tones, themes, and connotations. The prominent role of subtext and implication in some of the examples discussed above, then, such as *Ov. Am.* 1.14.19-22, in which what is presented as a plain visual comparison communicates much more than a basic visual impression both to reader and addressee, or *Prop.* 1.3.1-8, in which even the speaker himself seems unsure what to make of Cynthia's loose hair, is instructive. This kind of complexity of implication is even more prevalent, and often more densely layered, in scenes of pathetic dishevelment.

Some relatively straightforward instances, in the first sub-category I shall be dealing with – images of characters who are suffering or have suffered personal misfortune, including the dead – will illustrate this point. As explained in the introduction to this chapter, dishevelment is associated with unfortunate circumstances because it implies that one has no leisure, inclination, or ability to pay attention to one's appearance. By an extension of these associations, though, the image has its own sense of pathos, and can thus, in an almost circular way, increase the emotional impact of already pathetic situations.<sup>33</sup> Even when eliciting pity is the image's main function, that pity can be deepened, or made more finely shaded, by the incorporation of allusions or implications more specific than the general associations between dishevelment and suffering. Consider, for example, *Tib.* 1.10.37-8, describing the state of shades in the underworld (*illic percussisque genis ustoque capillo / errat ad obscuros pallida turba lacus*); *Prop.* 2.8.33-4, describing the dead Patroclus (*uiderat informem multa Patroclon harena / porrectum et sparsas caede iacere comas*); and *Prop.* 3.7.59-60, imagining the words of the shipwrecked Paetus (*quo rapitis miseris primae*

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<sup>33</sup> This seems to have been the case in life as well as literature; consider the intentional dishevelment of suppliants, or of defendants hoping to elicit pity (see Kaufman 1932: 145-6; Mustakallio 2003: 91-5; Christenson 2004: 62, 69).

*lanuginis annos? / attulimus longas in freta uestra comas*).<sup>34</sup> In the first example, the unfortunate appearance of the shades' hair helps to suggest their misery. The specific detail that their hair is singed, though, reflects the fact that their bodies have been cremated: they thus present the striking appearance of mourners and deceased rolled into one.<sup>35</sup> In the second example, the impact of the image of the dead and dishevelled Patroclus is magnified and given some extra, epic colouring by its resemblance to the scene of Achilles's mourning for Patroclus in the *Iliad* (18.23-7). By replacing Achilles's dirtied hair and face with Patroclus's own, Propertius conflates two scenes, economically suggesting Achilles's grief without having to describe it separately from the sight that prompts it. In the third example, the image of Paetus's head being overwhelmed by the waves is made more visually striking by mention of his youthful long hair, but also more poignant. Paetus does not yet have the short haircut of an adult man; together with *primae lanuginis* in the previous line, mention of his long hair emphasises the premature nature of his death.<sup>36</sup>

When emotions other than pity are added to the mix, things get more complicated, but the general principle, of engaging other or more specific implications at the same time as the basic pathos of dishevelment, remains the same. Ovid, for example, in the depictions of 'damsels in distress' that frequently crop up in his works, uses this multi-faceted image to evoke connotations so incompatible with each other as to be contradictory, thus differentiating the perspectives of the characters in a scene, or modulating the tone and the emotional atmosphere of a narrative. To take an example from his wider oeuvre: in the episode of Daphne's flight from Apollo, in the *Metamorphoses*, Daphne's loose and untended

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<sup>34</sup> The MSS read *longas . . . manus*, but commentators' attempts to explain the phrase (e.g., as a sign of Paetus's beauty (Rothstein; Butler & Barber), or his delicacy (Camps)) are unconvincing. I therefore follow Goold and Heyworth in favouring Oudendorp's conjecture, *comas*, which follows more naturally on the reference to Paetus's facial hair; on the liability of iambic words at the end of pentameters to become corrupted, see Heyworth 2007: 307.

<sup>35</sup> On this concept, see also below pg. 201-2. Contrast the image of dead lovers, happy in the Elysian fields, whose heads are crowned with myrtle (Tib. 1.3.65-6).

<sup>36</sup> On the significance of Paetus's early death in its full context, see Houghton 2007.

hair, at various points, is suggestive of her indifference to her own level of *cultus*, and her commitment to virginity (*Met.* 1.476-7; this represents Daphne's own perspective), of her beauty, and potential for greater beauty, were she more *culta* (1.497-8; Apollo's perspective),<sup>37</sup> and of her fear in her flight, which only makes her more attractive (1.529-30; Daphne's and Apollo's perspectives placed in direct conflict).<sup>38</sup>

The same technique is seen in Ovid's amatory works, though generally in mythical *exempla*, rather than in the primary narrative; this is perhaps because the concise way in which it contributes towards characterisation, tone, and atmosphere is most suited to digressions.<sup>39</sup> In a list of *exempla* literalising the metaphor of the lover as soldier, for example, in *Am.* 1.9, we see Agamemnon overcome by Cassandra's beauty: *summa ducum, Atrides uisa Priameide fertur / Maenadis effusis obstipuisse comis* (1.9.37-8). Note that he is described as dumbfounded not by Cassandra's appearance in general, but by her loose hair in particular; this suggests the image's generalised erotic connotations. But Cassandra is also described as a Maenad, because, like theirs, her loose hair suggests madness – in her case, of the prophetic kind.<sup>40</sup> We have seen how Bacchic frenzy can be eroticised; this adds specificity to the appeal of the spectacle, from Agamemnon's perspective. Through the reader's understanding of the nature of Cassandra's madness, though, together with the context, and the suggestion of misfortune and misery that her dishevelment also conveys, the same image suggests her perspective as well. *Am.* 1.9.37-8 is a particularly condensed example, in which opposed ideas are suggested simultaneously, by a single, brief description. In more extended *exempla* and digressions, though, a similar effect can be created in more

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<sup>37</sup> Apollo's thought process here echoes that of Ovid's own lover-persona at *Am.* 2.4.37.

<sup>38</sup> On this episode and its relation to elegy, see Otis 1970: 101-4; Nicoll 1980; Knox 1986: 14-17; Armstrong 2005: 140-3. A series of references to Lucretia's hair, in the *Fasti*, presents another example of the same technique: see *Fast.* 2.763-4 (Lucretia's unstyled hair suggests her virtue); 2.772 (to Tarquinius, the same loose hair seems erotic); 2.813-14 (the morning after Tarquinius has raped her, Lucretia's hair is compared to that of a mourning mother).

<sup>39</sup> See above, pg. 117-19, on *Am.* 1.7.11-18.

<sup>40</sup> Cassandra is often likened to a Maenad; see for example Eur. *El.* 1032; *Tro.* 173, 307, 349, 414-15; Prop. 3.13.61-2; Sen. *Ag.* 718-19. On Cassandra's loose hair, see above, pg. 118, n.65.

relaxed fashion, as it is at *Am.* 3.6.45-82, in the story of Ilia's encounter with the river Anio, and at *Ars* 1.525-64, in the story of Ariadne's abandonment by Theseus and rescue by Bacchus. The two stories share a similar outline, and in both Ovid manipulates the implications of the heroine's dishevelment to suggest both her perspective and that of an outside observer, but he does this with different emphasis in the two passages, with significant consequences for their respective tones.

In *Am.* 3.6, the story of the river Anio's 'rescue' of Ilia, wandering in distress at the aftermath of her rape by Mars, is an *exemplum* intended to persuade a swollen river to allow the speaker to cross, so that he can visit his beloved. Ilia's pitiful appearance is repeatedly stressed. At 3.6.47-8, Ovid states that Anio is attracted to her despite rather than because of her dishevelled appearance (*Ilia cui placuit, quamuis erat horrida cultu, / ungue notata comas, ungue notata genas*). But it is clear that Anio has not completely overlooked her dishevelment. He says himself that her plight has stirred his pity, and suggests that this is the source of his interest in her (3.6.59-60); as her dishevelled appearance is the first sign of her distress that he picks up on (*quo cultus abiere tui? quid sola uagaris, / uitta nec euinctas impedit alba comas?* 3.6.55-6), the attractive power of loose hair is, I think, implied. Ilia is more frightened than comforted by Anio's advances, and tears at her hair further (3.6.71) as she laments her misfortunes (3.6.73-8). Throughout, the pathos of her dishevelment predominates, and its attractiveness is only a subtext; the narrative leans towards her perspective. Even Anio's own questions to Ilia allude to the source of her shame and distress, by mentioning the loss of her *uittae*, the symbol of her status as a Vestal Virgin.<sup>41</sup> The final phase of the story, Ilia's 'rescue' by Anio when she attempts to drown herself in his waters

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<sup>41</sup> See Armstrong 2005: 106-9. Vestals wore a characteristic hairstyle, the *seni crines*, which resembled that worn by brides, and, like the traditional hairstyles of matrons, was bound with *uittae*; see La Follette 1994: 56-61; Wildfang 2006: 13, 15-16; Frapiccini 2011: 35-6 and fig. II.29. In Tibullus's version (2.5.51-4), Ilia discards her *uittae* to sleep with Mars; see also Ov. *Fast.* 3.29-34. The focus on Ilia's past status as a Vestal is a major problem with Keith's suggestion (1994: 38-9) that she here acts largely as a stand-in for the elegiac mistress ('[Anio] implies that she was formerly a *culta puella* with finely-styled locks').

(3.6.79-82) is, at best, an ambiguous ending to a rather unsettling passage. Critics have described the scene as mock-heroic, noting echoes of Ennius and Vergil,<sup>42</sup> if it is meant to parody the style of epic, this may explain its gloominess relative to the passage from the *Ars* to be examined next. In any case, the story does not have the desired effect on the river to whom it is addressed, which only floods further (3.6.85-6).<sup>43</sup>

The description of Ariadne's abandonment and her encounter with Bacchus and his followers in book one of the *Ars*, though similar in content, is quite different in tone, partly as a result of the way in which its heroine's pathetic dishevelment is handled. Unlike Ilia's dishevelment, which is a conscious, self-inflicted expression of her misery and shame, Ariadne's partial undress is incidental; it is the result of her unfortunate situation only inasmuch as it demonstrates her surprise and preoccupation. Having noticed Theseus's betrayal immediately upon waking, she laments in the loose tunic and with the unbound hair that she wore to sleep (*utque erat e somno, tunica uelata recincta, / nuda pedem, croceas irreligata comas*, 1.529-30).<sup>44</sup> Her appearance is thus less sharply pathetic than Ilia's, though the associations between dishevelment and misfortune are of course present and active, especially via reminiscence of Catull. 64.64-71. The fact that Ariadne is dressed for bed also makes for a stronger (and less problematic) emphasis on the erotic appeal of her loose hair and clothes; note the similarity of her appearance to that of the seductively dressed Corinna at *Am.* 1.5.9-10, down to the exact phrasing (*tunica uelata recincta*). The specificity and poeticism of the unusual adjective chosen to describe the colour of Ariadne's hair (*croceas*), too, hints at the *praeceptor's* relish in the visual element of the description.<sup>45</sup> He certainly

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<sup>42</sup> See Suter 1989: 19; Connor 1994: 109; and Boyd (1997: 214-17), who describes the story as a Hellenistic / Callimachean treatment of Ennian material. Davis (1999: 443-4) points out the political implications of emphasising the general sordidness and miserable consequences of Rome's foundation story for its heroine.

<sup>43</sup> An appropriate reaction, given the Callimachean comparison of long, wide-ranging epic poetry to a wide, muddy river; see Suter 1989: 17-20; Connors 1994: 108-9; Boyd 1997: 212-13. On other apparent allusions to Callimachus in the poem, see Courtney 1988: 20-3.

<sup>44</sup> On Ariadne's dishevelment in art and literature, see pg. 25, n.33.

<sup>45</sup> The only other use I can find of *croceus* referring to hair is also in Ovid, at *Am.* 2.4.43 (of Aurora's hair). The word is often applied to Aurora or her attributes: see Verg. *Georg.* 1.447; *Aen.* 4.585; 9.460; Luc. *Bell. Ciu.*

does not seem to be impartial, let alone to focalise the scene through Ariadne, as the speaker of *Am.* 3.6 largely does for Ilia. Consider 1.533-4 (*clamabatque flebatque simul, sed utrumque decebat; / non facta est lacrimis turpior illa suis*); as no one else is present, this must be the narrator's own assessment.<sup>46</sup> When Ariadne's lament is interrupted by the sound of Bacchus's train of revellers, and they burst onto the scene, the first of them that she sees are his Maenads, their hair loose as usual (*ecce, Mimallonides sparsis in terga capillis*, 1.541). Ariadne's pathetic dishevelment is thus literally brought face to face with the dishevelment of wild revelry. She is, in a sense, already dressed like a Maenad; it thus seems appropriate that she should join them, which, of course, is how the reader knows the story will end.<sup>47</sup> The description of Bacchus's train is light and humorous, focusing on their drunken antics rather than on the violence that sometimes characterises their appearances.<sup>48</sup> Despite Ariadne's fear (1.551-4), then, the *praeceptor*, and thus the reader, is distanced from her perspective. Her dishevelment is not explicitly cited as the source of her attractiveness to Bacchus, but it does not need to be; the *praeceptor*, as we have seen, anticipated Bacchus's perspective in his initial description of Ariadne's appearance. The fact that it is shared by and expressed directly through the speaker means that this perspective dominates. Thus, though Ariadne and Ilia, in these parallel narratives, are both depicted as dishevelled and fearful, and, in the end, are both overcome by force rather than seduced, the scene of Ariadne's 'rescue' seems much less unsettling than that of Ilia's, largely as a result of the way in which Ovid describes each heroine's dishevelment, suggests the other characters' reactions to it, and guides the reader's reactions to her misfortune by choosing whose perspective to support.

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3.238; *Ov. Ars* 3.179-80; *Met.* 3.509; *Fast.* 3.403. Its use at *Ars* 1.530, then, may be a sidelong visual comparison to another figure often depicted in the act of waking, noted for her beauty, and forming half of a mortal/immortal pairing; see Armstrong 2006: 242 n.49.

<sup>46</sup> See Murgatroyd 1994a: 87-8; Armstrong 2006: 242-4. Later in the *Ars*, Ariadne is used as an example of the appeal of dishevelment (3.157-8).

<sup>47</sup> The same comparison is used for foreshadowing at *Catull.* 64.61.

<sup>48</sup> See Murgatroyd 1994a: 88-9; as he goes on to explain (89-91), the weight given to Bacchus's arrival in itself lightens the tone of the scene as a whole, especially by contrast with the strong focus on Ariadne's plight in *Catull.* 64 and *Ov. Her.* 10.

Such ‘damsels in distress’ are rarer in Propertius and Tibullus, but one notable example, very different from Ovid’s in approach, should be discussed: the image of Cynthia, shipwrecked and drowning, that Propertius sees in his dreams in 2.26a. As she tries weakly to keep afloat, and confesses to all the lies she has told Propertius (2.26.1-3), her hair becomes heavy with seawater, and starts to pull her under (*nec iam umore graues tollere posse comas*, 2.26.4). This vivid detail adds to the pathos of the scene through its sensory evocativeness and its suggestion of Cynthia’s weakness. But its emotional impact is complicated by the fact that it also has a certain poetic justice to it. In earlier poems (1.2; 2.18.23-32; and, most relevant here, 1.15), Cynthia’s attention to her hair has been linked to deceit, fickleness, and infidelity;<sup>49</sup> there is, then, an element of situational irony in the idea of her hair helping to punish her for her lies (which she confesses, in her extremity, 2.26.3). This remains subtextual; Propertius’s tone in 2.26a often drifts from the distraught into the fanciful, but explicitly he expresses nothing but fear, concern, and love. Nonetheless, the image contributes to the element of wish-fulfilment that complicates the poem’s more straightforward nightmare elements.<sup>50</sup> It is important to note, too, that Propertius’s account of the dream is addressed to Cynthia herself; if its narrative is meant in part to be a warning about the kind of misfortune she can expect to result from her deception and mistreatment of him, the appropriateness of the image of her hair as one of the agents of this retribution helps to drive this point home.<sup>51</sup>

The role that pathetic dishevelment thus fulfils in Prop. 2.26a, of helping to develop subtext, and a greater complexity of tone than is expressed outright, is comparable to its function in passages that more obviously constitute threats, warnings, and curses – contexts

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<sup>49</sup> See above, pg. 22-31.

<sup>50</sup> See Quinn 1963: 187-97; Lefèvre 1966: 43-5; Flaschenriem 2010: 193. Quinn (1963: 189-90) suggests that the image of Cynthia being unable to hold up her head evokes that of someone hanging her head in shame: compare 1.15.37, *et contra magnum potes hos [sc. ocellos] attollere Solem?*.

<sup>51</sup> See Flaschenriem 2010: 190. For dreams described as ominous of future misfortune elsewhere in elegy, see Prop. 2.29.27-8; Ov. *Am.* 3.5; [Tib.] 3.4 (Lygdamus). On contemporary attitudes to dreams, see Harris 2003.

in which the speaker might pity the figure described, and yet also enjoy contemplating his or her misfortune, or at least consider that misfortune fitting. In one such passage, Tibullus foresees the punishment that Marathus will suffer for leaving him for a rich rival; his beauty will be ruined by the hot climate of the distant countries his new lover will take him to:

*iam mihi persoluet poenas, pulvisque decorem  
detrahet et uentis horrida facta coma;  
uretur facies, urentur sole capilli,  
deteret inualidos et uia longa pedes.* (1.9.13-16)

The passage recalls that in which Propertius warns Cynthia off going to Illyria with his praetor rival, by describing how she will suffer from the cold (1.8.7-8) – a passage that, in turn, seems to allude to Gallus.<sup>52</sup> By contrast to the situation in Prop. 1.8, though, there is no suggestion in Tib. 1.9 that any journey has really been planned by Tibullus's rival. We are, then, probably to imagine the scene described at 1.9.13-16 as purely a fantasy of the speaker's, along the lines of Prop. 2.26a, rather than a genuine (or even plausible) prediction of Marathus's future.<sup>53</sup> Note that, in Tibullus's version of Prop. 1.8's (and perhaps Gallus's) warnings, hot weather replaces cold. This inversion sits well with the other reversals in the situation – the speaker addresses a boy who has chosen wealth over love, rather than a woman who is about to do the opposite<sup>54</sup> – but it also allows for an element of poetic justice comparable to that seen in Prop. 2.26.4, as heat and dryness were thought to be particularly damaging to hair's beauty. Tibullus claims to have warned Marathus not to 'pollute his beauty with gold' (*auro ne pollue formam*, 1.9.17), and the penalty he has just imagined Marathus undergoing is a partial literalisation of that metaphor: his beauty will not simply be marred in some symbolic sense, by his having sold it, but ruined in the literal sense, and as a direct result of his choice. The close link between this poem and that which precedes it makes the description at 1.8.9-16 of Marathus's overzealous attention to his appearance

<sup>52</sup> This assumption is based on another apparent allusion to the same passage from Gallus at Verg. *Ecl.* 10.46-9; see Quinn 1962: 245-6; Ross 1975: 85 and the sources there cited.

<sup>53</sup> Compare also Hor. *Carm.* 3.27.

<sup>54</sup> See McGann 1983: 1992-3.

resonate here: we can imagine that the ruin of his hair would be a particularly stinging loss for him.<sup>55</sup> In this case, then, instead of accompanying or worsening some genuinely serious misfortune (unless weary travel counts) and making it more pathetic, dishevelment actually constitutes a misfortune in itself. Tibullus is hurt by Marathus's betrayal, but still infatuated with him regardless; he thus feels that divine punishment would be appropriate (1.9.3-4), but cannot bear the thought of its manifesting itself in any serious way (1.9.5-6). Punishment with dishevelment makes for a compromise that he can comfortably revel in, since it is not a truly serious misfortune, but would be perceived as such by Marathus. In Tib. 1.9 as in Prop. 2.26a, then, dishevelment is used to add colour to a pitiful situation, but, because of the other associations of hair and *cultus* – both cultural ones, and character-specific ones that have been built up in the preceding elegies – the same image produces a satisfying irony.

In another prediction of misfortune, in *Am.* 2.14, Ovid likewise uses the ambiguity of tone made possible by dishevelment's wide range of associations to communicate his speaker's confused emotional state, but the result is almost opposite to that of Prop. 2.26.4 or Tib. 1.9.13-16. In the preceding poem, *Am.* 2.13, Ovid has prayed for the safety of Corinna, whose life is in danger after an abortion. In 2.14, he delivers a more general diatribe against the practice, but this, too, strays into the personal. Towards the end of the poem, he describes a woman's death following an abortion (2.14.37-8); the crowds witnessing her funeral procession consider her fate well-deserved (*ipsa perit ferturque rogo resoluta capillos, / et clamant 'merito' qui modo cumque uident*, 2.14.39-40). The detail that the dead woman is lying on her bier with her hair loose is a significant one, and apt to be misinterpreted if it is assumed that it reflects usual funerary practice. Under ordinary circumstances, the dead would be dressed and adorned for a funeral procession; for women, this will have meant that

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<sup>55</sup> His feet are also mentioned in both passages (1.8.14; 1.9.16). For more on 1.8 and 1.9, see above, pg. 46-51, 140-2.

their hair would be styled as it was in life.<sup>56</sup> The dishevelment of the woman in the *exemplum*, then, not only suggests that she died in pain and distress, through the image's general pathetic connotations, but, via this specific referent, suggests that no one has cared enough to prepare her properly for cremation and burial. The image also makes possible an evocative visual reversal. At a Roman funeral, it is ordinarily the mourners whose hair is loose and dishevelled; since no mourners are mentioned, and those present are described as shouting cruel remarks, the dead woman herself is essentially depicted as the only one grieving at her funeral – a strikingly pathetic image.<sup>57</sup>

The passage comes immediately before, and directly prompts, the major turning-point in the poem. Ovid has spent more than thirty lines fiercely decrying abortion, but, as we know from the preceding poem, the strength of his feelings has been fed by worry for Corinna's safety. When his condemnation veers from the general towards the specific with this *exemplum*, it seems that his sympathy is reawakened, since the next lines form a prayer that the description might not prove prophetic (2.14.41-2).<sup>58</sup> Just as, in *Am.* 1.14 (in a more light-hearted vein), he had played with the idea of Corinna's hair as a separate entity, and victim of her cruelty,<sup>59</sup> Ovid in 2.14 takes advantage of the idea that the woman who dies following an abortion is, in a sense, both the agent and the victim of her own misfortune. The result is a situation in which the two emotions resulting from the speaker's fear for Corinna's safety – anger towards her as agent of her suffering, and concern for her as its victim – jostle for position.<sup>60</sup> In the *exemplum* of 2.14.37-40, the rhetoric fuelled by his anger has apparently run away with him, and, unable to hope that Corinna's funeral, should she die, will

<sup>56</sup> See Bodel 1999: 166, fig. 2-3; Hope 2009: 72-3. See also below, pg. 237-8, on Prop. 4.7.7.

<sup>57</sup> On a funerary monument that seems to play on the same idea, though to different effect, see Bartman 2001: 6-7 and fig. 4. In the context of *Am.* 2.14, the image possibly also alludes to the loosening of women's hair during childbirth, on which (and on the possible symbolic connection between this practice and the loosening of women's hair at funerals), see Corbeill 2004: 35-7, 92-3.

<sup>58</sup> On the various effects of the final lines on our perception of what has come before, see Parker 1969: 87-8; Due 1980: 149; Gamel 1989: 189.

<sup>59</sup> See above, pg. 63-5.

<sup>60</sup> See Yardley 1977: 398. As Due points out (1980: 145, 148), Ovid's own feelings of guilt also creep in at various points.

mimic the pathetic one he has described, he swings back into the fear and sympathy that dominated 2.13. The speaker, struck by the pathos of the image he has created, seems to change his mind about his subject almost in the process of describing it.

In many of the images of pathetic dishevelment we have examined so far, dishevelment makes the external danger or misfortune that a character is suffering seem more vivid and acute, in part by suggesting that it is or has been accompanied by emotional pain. Given elegy's focus on the difficulties and pains associated with love, and its equation of love with madness, disease, and other states of protracted suffering,<sup>61</sup> it is not surprising that the same image should be used to suggest the emotional anguish of abandoned or rejected lovers, even in the absence of serious physical danger. In such cases, the image's implications are influenced by the fact that the dishevelment is the result of essentially wilful self-neglect. The description of Calypso abandoned by Ulysses, at Prop. 1.15.9-14 – an *exemplum* for the over-adorned and fickle Cynthia<sup>62</sup> – economically demonstrates the further implications this creates, and how they operate. Calypso's self-neglect (*multos illa dies incomptis maesta capillis / sederat*, 1.15.11-12) is the visual expression of her lamentation, as is underlined by the bracketing of *maesta* by *incomptis . . . capillis* in line 11, but it also suggests the central importance of her love over all other concerns. She is so preoccupied with thoughts of Ulysses that she pays no attention to her personal appearance.<sup>63</sup> The description is set in direct opposition to that of Cynthia, whose excessive self-adornment, as Propertius sees it, demonstrates her desire to attract or impress a new lover (1.15.4-8). Calypso's pining, by contrast, demonstrates her faithfulness. In short, the dishevelment of pining lovers is an indication of the strength of their love not only because it symbolises their suffering, but because it suggests the single-minded nature of their devotion.

<sup>61</sup> On the motif of love as a disease in elegy, see Laigneau 1999: 98-102; Rothaus Caston 2006: 282-4.

<sup>62</sup> See above, pg. 22-7.

<sup>63</sup> Her behaviour (sitting on the seashore all day, weeping) echoes that of Odysseus pining for home and Penelope in the Calypso episode of the *Odyssey* (5.81-4, 151-9); the image is reapplied in the same way as that of the mourning Achilles at Prop. 2.8.33-4 (discussed above, pg. 193-4), and to similar effect.

These additional implications are put to particularly effective use in Propertius 3.6, a poem that operates largely on the level of subtext. The elegy is a dialogue between Propertius and Lygdamus, the slave acting as go-between for him and Cynthia;<sup>64</sup> it opens with Propertius begging Lygdamus for information about Cynthia's current behaviour and state of mind, and warning him to be truthful, rather than tell him what he wants to hear (3.6.1-12). His questions are so specific, though, that Lygdamus (and the reader) could scarcely fail to grasp that Propertius is, in fact, waiting and hoping for his own conception of what Cynthia is doing to be confirmed:

*sic illam<sup>65</sup> incomptis uidisti flere capillis?  
 illius ex oculis multa cadebat aqua?  
 nec speculum in strato uidisti, Lygdame, lecto?  
 ornabat niueas nullane gemma manus?* (3.6.9-12)

Evidently the lovers are at odds; if Cynthia were sitting at home unkempt, this would indicate that she is as upset and preoccupied with the rift as Propertius is himself. Hence his hope (which might otherwise seem merely vindictive) that she is so distressed as to be utterly neglecting her appearance – an idea that he develops in detail, imagining not only her unkempt hair, but her neglect of her mirror and her jewellery. The description is, in effect, the inversion of that of Cynthia's careful attention to her appearance at 1.15.5-8, which had prompted the comparison to Calypso described above; Propertius is essentially expressing the hope that, this time, Cynthia is acting like an *exemplum* of devotion after all. And Lygdamus, in his reply, maintains that the description is accurate. Cynthia is wearing loose clothes, like a mourner (3.6.13); the image implies that she is also unkempt and unadorned, as Propertius

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<sup>64</sup> Many critics and commentators see 3.6 as a monologue, with lines 13-34 constituting Propertius's anticipation of, or response to, Lygdamus's narrative, which is not reported directly; see for example Butler & Barber 1933: 273; Camps 1966: 78; Richardson 1976: 337. Reading the poem as a dialogue, however, clarifies some grammatical peculiarities and interpretative difficulties; see Butrica 1983, especially 23-33; Heyworth 2007: 304-5; Heyworth & Morwood 2011: 146-7. Boucher (1965: 435) points out the poem's recollection of scenes from comedy; see also Yardley 1972: 135, Butrica 1983: 33-6, and below, n.67.

<sup>65</sup> This is Havet's conjecture, to emend the nonsensical variants found in the MSS; see Hutchinson 1986: 234; Heyworth 2007: 305. For other suggested emendations, see Bailey 1956: 147; Yardley 1986.

had hoped.<sup>66</sup> She is even occupying herself with virtuous household tasks, and weeping (3.6.15-18). But this description, and the long speech that Lygdamus recounts, in which Cynthia bewails her separation from Propertius (3.6.19-34), are bracketed by Propertius's concerns about their truthfulness (3.6.3-6, 35). And the account seems too good to be true. The virtuous lack of concern for attracting others on Cynthia's part that is implied by Propertius's questions (3.6.9-12) is latched onto and extrapolated on in Lygdamus's description of the mourning household, and Cynthia's wifely occupations.<sup>67</sup> The strength of Cynthia's love, that Propertius's description had also implied, is similarly elaborated on, and expressed not only through her anguish at her separation from Propertius (3.6.19-24) but, at greater length, through her jealous anger (3.6.25-34). It is not, in the end, made clear whether the description is meant to be an accurate representation of what Cynthia has been doing and saying; as presented, it could just as easily be the story that Cynthia has instructed Lygdamus to spin for Propertius to effect a reconciliation, or, for that matter, Lygdamus's own invention, designed to secure his own freedom (offered at 3.6.2, 42).<sup>68</sup> But the poem's effectiveness relies on this ambiguity, which in turn depends on the fact that Lygdamus's account so precisely picks up and elaborates on each of the multiple implications of Propertius's original, imagined picture of Cynthia's dishevelled state, at lines 9-12.

Of course, it is more usual for the poet's own lover-persona to be the one bemoaning his unrequited love. As men's hairstyles were ordinarily very short, this rarely manifests itself in images of dishevelled hair, though other symptoms of self-neglect, especially paleness and thinness, fulfil a similar role.<sup>69</sup> There is one important exception, though, made possible by the extended mythical *exemplum* of Apollo's service as the cowherd of Admetus

<sup>66</sup> On loose clothes in Roman mourning, see Corbeill 2004: 92-3.

<sup>67</sup> Compare Cynthia's appearance and behaviour to Tibullus's description of how he would like to find Delia on his return from Phaeacia (1.3.83-92); on the element of wish-fulfilment in that description, see below, pg. 216-18. Compare also Cynthia's description of a lonely evening waiting for Propertius (1.3.41-6), and, from comedy, the behaviour of the virtuous Antiphila at Ter. *Heaut.* 263-309.

<sup>68</sup> Similar doubts can also be applied to Propertius's own protestations of innocence (3.6.35-40).

<sup>69</sup> See above, pg. 86.

at Tib. 2.3.11-28, in which Apollo's dishevelment features prominently. The story acts as the precedent and justification for Tibullus's willingness to do hard manual labour in the countryside if it will mean he can be close to Nemesis (2.3.5-10), who has followed a richer lover to his country villa; Apollo's servitude, as Tibullus's would be, is a degrading gesture, undertaken for the sake of love, but without real hope of success. In citing love of Admetus as the motive for Apollo's servitude, Tibullus is adopting a Hellenistic development on the myth. But he also adapts it further: his sources for the erotic spin on the story, as far as we can tell, did not emphasise the more humiliating aspects of Apollo's servitude, as Tibullus does.<sup>70</sup> This apparent innovation allows the image of pathetic dishevelment to carry yet further implications, beyond those of generalised suffering, or those of selfless devotion and single-minded love that we have seen in Prop. 1.15.9-14 and 3.6.9-12.

Apollo's proverbially long and beautiful hair makes two appearances in the passage. First, his *intonsae . . . comae* are listed among his traditional attributes, along with his beauty, his musical ability, and his medical knowledge, but only to point out that none of these enabled him to win Admetus's love, or to cure himself of his own (2.3.12-14). Later in the passage, a similar list of attributes is shown to have been negated or cast aside as a result of Apollo's service to Admetus. His beauty is counteracted by his new bumpkin status (to Diana's embarrassment, 2.3.17-18); the mooing of the cattle interrupts his singing (2.3.19-20); his oracular seats are neglected and useless (2.3.21-2); and, in the course of his service, he has become dishevelled beyond recognition:

*saepe horrere sacros doluit Latona capillos,  
quos admirata est ipsa nouerca prius.  
quisquis inornatumque caput crinesque solutos  
aspiceret, Phoebi quaereret ille comam. (2.3.23-6)*

Heavy emphasis is placed on the altered state of Apollo's hair, by its placement at the end of

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<sup>70</sup> On the relationship of 2.3.11-22 to its Hellenistic sources, especially Callimachus's *Hymn to Apollo*, see Copley 1947: 285-8, 292-4; Solimani 1970; Cairns 1979: 120-1; Whitaker 1979: 132-3; Foulon 1980: 254-60.

the list, by the fact that it is given two couplets instead of one, and by what Maltby (2002: *ad loc.*) calls a ‘remarkable . . . accumulation of synonyms for hair’: *capillos, caput, crines*, and *comam* all in the space of four lines. Like the rest of the *exemplum*, the picture has its humorous side – Apollo is comically, not genuinely pathetic – but it retains a serious undertone. Apollo’s single-minded love for Admetus, and the degrading tasks he has undertaken to pursue him, have robbed him of his usual identity.<sup>71</sup> Long and beautiful hair is not a neutral aspect of Apollo’s appearance, but a symbol of his eternal youth, of rationality and order, and, in short, of his divinity, as is reinforced by the use of the word *sacros* to describe it in line 23. Consider the image of Apollo’s unshorn hair as it appears in Tib. 2.5. References to it bracket the body of the poem, and are associated not only with Apollo’s powers of prophecy, but with a general civilising influence, and fostering of peace and order. In the opening invocation, Apollo is asked to comb his long hair, so that he may look as he did when Jupiter overthrew Saturn (2.5.7-10), and in the final couplet, a prayer for Apollo’s favour in the future is sealed with a reference to his and Diana’s eternal youth, symbolised in Apollo’s case by his unshorn hair (*adnue: sic tibi sint intonsi, Phoebae, capilli, / sic tua perpetuo sit tibi casta soror*, 2.5.121-2).<sup>72</sup> The loss of what might seem like a relatively trivial feature at 2.3.23-6 thus stands in for the loss of these more significant powers and attributes. The *exemplum* is in itself light-hearted, but, since the story has been inserted to justify Tibullus’s own attitude of complete submission to Nemesis, the ridicule is self-directed, and has a bitter edge. The passage’s immediate purpose is to demonstrate the principle with which Tibullus summarises it (2.3.29-32): that even hopeless, degrading love is better than no love at all, and is justified by divine precedent. But, in retrospect, it adds depth to sentiments he expresses later in the poem, when he professes to be willing to embrace wealth, if that is what Nemesis will respond to (2.3.49-60), and curses agriculture and the

<sup>71</sup> See Bright 1978: 196-8; Hohenwallner 2001: 45-6.

<sup>72</sup> On the role of Apollo (and his hair) in 2.5, see Cairns 1979: 70-1; Foulon 1983; Gosling 1987; Lee-Stecum 2000: 200-11; Miller 2009: 234-47.

countryside, since they have separated him from her (2.3.61-6): actions that the reader of book one – or even of 2.1 – would not expect of Tibullus. Desperation in the face of rejection has made him unrecognisable, just as it has in Apollo's case; the evocative image of Apollo's dishevelment visually expresses and prefigures an effect that, in Tibullus's case, must remain more abstract.<sup>73</sup>

### Part 3: Dishevelled Mourning in Propertius and Tibullus

Scenes of death and burial and the imagery of funerary ritual are common in elegy. This is in part attributable to the traditional association of the elegiac metre with lament and funerary epigrams, but the licence to externalise one's emotions in dramatic fashion that public mourning provided in real life also makes the imagery associated with funerals appropriate to a genre focusing on the 'public' expression of intense feelings.<sup>74</sup> The funeral imagery appearing in elegy is, as we shall see, rich and varied, but that aspect which most concerns us here is of course the loosing, dishevelment, or even tearing of the hair by female mourners. It is important to keep in mind the difference in context between those images of dishevelment seen in the previous section, which are associated with general misfortune and suffering, and this specific variant. When placed in the context of a funeral, letting one's hair down changes from a generic sign of suffering and lament into a sign of formal mourning, which would be familiar to all contemporary readers. It was ordinarily performed by the closest female relatives of the deceased, with his widow and/or his mother foremost among them. Especially when it is accompanied by other acts of mourning traditionally associated with female family members, such as breast-beating, kissing the dead loved one, or wailing, the loosing of women's hair at funerals thus suggests not only their grief, but their familial

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<sup>73</sup> For more on Tib. 2.3 as it relates to what has come before it, see above, pg. 150-1.

<sup>74</sup> See Luck 1969: 25-7; Griffin 1985: 142-3; Hohenwallner 2001: 47-8; Hope 2009: 144; Houghton 2011: 71-3.

piety, and their social identity as defined by their relationship to the deceased.<sup>75</sup> This has important implications for the interpretation of the image, seen in several of the examples to be discussed, of the speaker's mistress performing these actions. This would not have been seen by the contemporary reader as a matter of course, or as a simple expression of her love, but as a strong statement about the primacy of the speaker's connection with his mistress over other personal relationships, and of the relative lack of importance for him of his role in his family and in society.<sup>76</sup>

Putting one's mistress in the role of unkempt mourner, though, also allows for further connotations and implications to come into play. The association between *cultus* and the conscious desire to attract, for example – and its corollary, the association between chastity or fidelity and a lack of attention to *cultus* – can make the loosing of a woman's hair at her lover's funeral a sign of her faithfulness as well as her love. Her attachment to the deceased has trumped her concern for her appearance, and the desire to attract other lovers. The erotic potential of the image of loose hair, on the other hand – especially when it appears in combination with other erotically charged acts of mourning, such as the baring of the breasts – can also add an element of visual appeal.<sup>77</sup> Given that the image of a woman loosing her hair in mourning is thus so rich in possibilities, it is not surprising that all the elegists employ it more than once, nor that they do so in a great variety of ways, each responding to the others: in fantasies of their own funerals, both optimistic and pessimistic (Prop. 1.17.21-2

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<sup>75</sup> On the formal and symbolic character of these actions, and their association with close female relatives, see Treggiari 1991: 489-91; Mustakallio 2003: 86, 91-5 and 2005: 183-4; Corbeil 2004: 75-7, 85-8; Hope 2009: 72-3, 95; Graham 2011: 30-2; Šterbenc Erker 2011: 44-6, 49-50. For literary examples, see Catull. 64.350-1; Ov. *Met.* 8.527, *Fast.* 6.493; Lucan, *Bell. Ciu.* 2.23; Stat. *Theb.* 3.133-9 (mothers); Verg. *Aen.* 12.605-6; Plut. *Mor.* 267a-c (daughters); Lucan, *Bell. Ciu.* 2.335; 8.739-40; 9.171-2; Petr. *Sat.* 111; Apul. *Met.* 2.23 (widows). Hired mourners, *praeficae*, were also common at this period (see Richlin 2001: 243-5; Mustakallio 2005: 184-5; Hope 2009: 75-6; Šterbenc Erker 2011: 48; and especially Dutsch 2008), but they are not mentioned in the passages to be examined. This is perhaps because of elegy's focus on 'sincere' emotion – and, for that matter, on the speaker's poverty, and lack of concern for status other than as lover and poet (hired mourners were a show of wealth and influence; on the element of public spectacle in Roman funerals, see Bodet 1999); *praeficae* may in some cases, though, be conspicuous by their absence; see below, pg. 220.

<sup>76</sup> Compare the sentiments expressed at Prop. 1.11.21-4; 2.6.41-2; 2.7; 2.18.33-4. See also Griffin 1985: 144, 148-9; Houghton 2011: 63-7.

<sup>77</sup> See Richlin 2001: 237-8, 240-1.

(locks of hair as a grave offering); 2.24.51-2; Tib. 1.1.67-8; 1.3.5-6), in *exempla* (Prop. 2.9.13-14; 2.13.55-6; 3.13.17-18) and allegory (Prop. 2.15.45-6), and, in Ovid's case (to be examined in the next section of this chapter), even in parodic scenes ranging from the absurd to the affectionate (*Am.* 2.6.5; 3.9.3, 11, 51-2; *Ars* 3.431-2).

Since the poets' responses to each other's uses of funeral imagery are an important factor in several of the passages to be discussed, and contribute to the development of the theme, I shall approach the examples in roughly chronological order.<sup>78</sup> In book one of Propertius, then, we are presented with two visualisations of Cynthia's reaction to the speaker's death (1.17.11-12, 19-24; 1.19.3-4, 21-4), both characterised by doubt and fear: in 1.17, regretting having left Cynthia, Propertius imagines the funeral he could have had if he had stayed with her, and in 1.19, a more general reflection on the idea of his death, he contrasts his confidence in the immortality of his love for Cynthia with his fears about the longevity of her love for him. In the latter poem, tears (1.19.23) and visits to his grave (1.19.21-2) are the only images used to suggest Cynthia's grief. These are tributes that anyone who knew the deceased might plausibly perform (consider Maecenas, at Prop. 2.1.75-8), and the fact that both are negated as soon as they are introduced – Cynthia's tears might be dried by a rival; she might spurn his tomb after all – reflects the strength of Propertius's doubts about her feelings. Compare the images of mourning in 1.17. Here too, Propertius fears that Cynthia may not weep for him (1.17.11-12), but this is now linked with the idea that she may not care whether she gets to hug his burnt bones – that is, receive his cinerary urn, prior to its burial.<sup>79</sup> This is a more specific and vivid image, but also one that introduces the idea, not seen in the generic actions in 1.19, of Propertius's relationship with Cynthia as equal to (or greater than) a familial connection: gathering or receiving the bones and ashes of

<sup>78</sup> I follow the chronology laid out by Lyne at 1998: 520-4; see above, pg. 45, n.75.

<sup>79</sup> In context, the scenario imagined is probably that in which a man, having died abroad, is cremated there, and his ashes returned to Rome; consider for example the return of Brutus's ashes to Servilia (Plut. *Brut.* 53.4), or the retrieval of Germanicus's ashes by Agrippina (Tac. *Ann.* 2.75).

the dead was the duty of the closest female relative.<sup>80</sup> The idea of Cynthia as Propertius's actual widow, suggested by this passage, should thus be kept in mind throughout the alternative description, later in the poem, of what his death would have been like had he stayed with her, and died at home. Cynthia could have placed roses and a lock of her hair in his grave (1.17.21-2), and begged the earth not to lie heavy on him (23-4). Placing offerings in a pyre or a grave was entirely usual, and the sentiment in lines 23-4 is a commonplace of funerary inscriptions, making the description, in one sense, quite calm and conventional.<sup>81</sup> Cynthia's specific actions, though, do not reflect typical Roman practice; offerings of cut hair in particular are characteristic of scenes of mourning in epic, tragedy, and other Hellenised, mythic, or consciously archaic contexts, but not of contemporary Roman ones.<sup>82</sup> Just as, throughout the poem, Cynthia is imagined as something between the speaker's 'real', human mistress and an apostrophised goddess (she is thought of as influencing the weather, 1.17.5-6), the images of her mourning incorporate both realistic, contemporary details and a fanciful, mythic/literary aspect. Note, though, that in any case we are presented with only the more peaceful and dignified, and, significantly, the less public phase of the proceedings. It makes sense for the speaker to focus his thoughts on his burial (the main concern of the shipwrecked or stranded)<sup>83</sup> rather than his funeral, but the result is that there is no following of Propertius's bier to his pyre, no weeping over and kissing his corpse, no scratching of the face or the breasts. There is not even any loose hair, although Cynthia's hair is specifically mentioned. In both 1.17 and 1.19, then, the imagery of mourning is relatively restrained, and abstracted. The contexts of doubt and fear in which the scenes appear make calmer and less visually striking displays of grief more appropriate than hair-tearing: in cases in which one fears that

<sup>80</sup> See Treggiari 1991: 490-1; Mustakallio 2003: 89-90 and 2005: 188-90; Hope 2009: 84.

<sup>81</sup> For offerings placed in graves or pyres, and the sentiment of lines 23-4, see Yardley 1996: 269-70; Hope 2009: 82-4, 101-2. On the conventional character of the description, see Hubbard 1974: 34; Papanghelis 1987: 99-101.

<sup>82</sup> See Dalzell 1980: 31; Houghton 2011: 68-9.

<sup>83</sup> On concern for proper cremation and burial, see Noy 2000 and 2011: 3-4, 13; Hope 2009: 60-1. On this theme in elegy, see Houghton 2007.

one's mistress may not mourn at all, it is best to keep one's preferred alternatives either restrained enough to be plausible, or abstracted enough to be perceived as symbolic.

If Propertius's introduction at 1.17.11-12 of the idea of the lover's mistress mourning him as if she were actually his widow was an innovation on his part, it makes Tibullus's developments on the theme all the more striking. Immediately upon introducing the subject of his love for Delia (1.1.51-8), he communicates the depth of that love by expressing the desire to die in her presence (59-60). As this idea takes hold, the wish becomes a prediction, and Tibullus narrates his ideal funeral: Delia will weep, and kiss him as he lies on his bier (61-4); in fact, he will have a crowd of young mourners (65-6) – admirers of his verse, perhaps. Delia, her hair loosed, will no doubt be inclined to express her grief more strongly, but Tibullus begs her not to go too far: *tu manes ne laede meos, sed parce solutis / crinibus et teneris, Delia, parce genis* (1.1.67-8). As Lyne explains (1998: 529), the funeral passage as a whole can be read as a response to Propertius's visions of his own death in 1.17 and 1.19, with his doubts and fears about Cynthia's love replaced by Tibullus's firm confidence in Delia's. It is not only Delia's general inclination to mourn Tibullus (compared with Cynthia's feared indifference) that creates the contrast, though, but the nature of her mourning. Tibullus takes the idea of the mistress as grieving widow hinted at in Prop. 1.17 and runs with it, making all Delia's actions those of a close relative, and focusing on those that constitute a public display of that status: kissing him,<sup>84</sup> loosing her hair, and so on. Tibullus's request that Delia spare her cheeks and hair, too, is more than the expression of confident magnanimity that Lyne describes it as. The idea that the distress experienced by mourners can upset the shade of the deceased is, as Lyne notes (1998: 529, n.38), a commonplace;<sup>85</sup> the terms that Tibullus uses, though, create an especially vivid impression. The word *laedere* can mean 'to

<sup>84</sup> Delia's kisses evoke the practice of 'catching' a dying person's last breath with a kiss – an action holding strong implications of familial *pietas*; see Šterbenc Erker 2011: 46.

<sup>85</sup> See also Murgatroyd 1980: *ad loc.*; Yardley 1996: 270. Actual face-scratching and hair-tearing at funerals, though practised, was seen as lacking in decorum; see Mustakallio 2005: 184-5; Hope 2009: 128. This may also be a subtext of Tibullus's request.

hurt' in the emotional sense, but this is an extension of its literal meaning, 'to strike', or 'to wound'.<sup>86</sup> By attraction, as it were, to the image of Delia's tearing at her own hair and face in her grief, the phrase *manes ne laede meos* (1.1.67) suggests that such actions would cause actual pain and damage to Tibullus's shade, rather than simple distress. This evokes the concept of physical damage done to the bodies of the dead being reflected in the appearance of their shades.<sup>87</sup> In this case, though, it is damage to Delia that would be reflected on Tibullus's shade – a vivid and touching evocation of the strength of his connection to her, symbolised a few lines earlier by the image of chains binding the two together (1.1.55).<sup>88</sup>

Overall, whereas Propertius's visions of his death and burial in book one had occurred in the context of his separation from Cynthia, whether literal or figurative, and had emphasised that separation, Tibullus's vision does quite the opposite, and his choice of more public, extravagant, and entirely contemporary displays of mourning emphasises that difference. Of course, the whole scenario remains a fantasy, and is no more realistic a prediction than Propertius's rueful visions in 1.17. The picture of Delia as Tibullus's devoted widow is thus an expression of his own love rather than hers: a dramatisation of his unfulfillable wishes for their relationship, rather than a confident prediction for the future, based on Delia's current feelings and behaviour.<sup>89</sup> Nonetheless, it is a strong statement. Critics tend to concentrate on the tameness and sentimentality of Tibullus's hopes for his funeral as compared with those expressed by Propertius at 2.13.27-30 (to be discussed below),<sup>90</sup> but they seem dramatic enough when compared instead with Prop. 1.17 and 1.19.

Tibullus revisits the idea of his death and funeral soon afterwards, in a poem that

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<sup>86</sup> *OLD*, s. u. *laedo*, 2, 5; 1a-b.

<sup>87</sup> Compare, for example, Cynthia's ghost, who bears the marks of her inadequate cremation (4.7.8-9), and Tibullus's own description of the shades in the underworld (1.10.37-8); see Yardley 1977a: 84-5.

<sup>88</sup> Compare *Ov. Am.* 1.7.60, discussed above, pg. 121-2.

<sup>89</sup> At best, the passage reflects the hope that his death (for love of her?) may finally prompt Delia to reciprocate his feelings more fully (see Bright 1978: 131-2; Lee-Stecum 1998: 55-7). Hence the persuasive turn that the poem takes next, on which see above, pg. 132-5.

<sup>90</sup> See for example Papanghelis 1987: 99; Lyne 1998: 536-7.

again plays on the contrast between the actual Delia and his fantasy Delia, via three separate images of loose hair in three different contexts. In 1.3, like Propertius in 1.17, Tibullus is stranded in a foreign land, and contemplating the idea that he may die far from home, and be denied a proper burial. His situation as regards Delia and her feelings about his absence, though, are in direct contrast to Propertius's in 1.17, since he has left on campaign with Messalla, against his own and Delia's wishes (1.3.9-22), rather than having done so specifically to escape her. The fantasy funeral Tibullus would have had were he dying at home is thus reminiscent of, but significantly different from that described by Propertius:

*abstineas, Mors atra, precor: non hic mihi mater  
quae legat in maestos ossa perusta sinus,  
non soror Assyrios cineri quae dedat odores  
et fleat effusis ante sepulcra comis,  
Delia non usquam, quae, me cum mitteret urbe,  
dicitur ante omnes consuluisse deos. (1.3.5-10)*

His bones would be embraced by his mother, and offerings made at his tomb by his sister, instead of either of these actions being performed by his mistress (compare Prop. 1.17.11-12, 21-2). Most surprisingly, though, in the more immediate context of Tib. 1.1.67-8, it is his sister who mourns him with her hair loose, and not Delia. This may seem oddly inconsistent, or to be a change made for the sake of variety, but makes most sense if viewed as a return to realism after the flight of fancy that the vision in 1.1 had represented: in reality, it is precisely Tibullus's mother and sister who would have been expected to perform these actions.

Mention of Delia immediately afterward toys with the idea of her participating in the formal aspects of his funeral alongside his female relatives, making the reader expect that this will be described next;<sup>91</sup> instead, though, Tibullus swerves into thoughts of Delia's actions upon his

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<sup>91</sup> Some critics assume that Delia *is* meant to be present (see, for example, Lee-Stecum 1998: 105), but 'I have no family here to mourn me, and no Delia at all' is not the same as 'I have no family or Delia here to mourn me'. Lygdamus, in [Tib.] 3.2, a poem that shows the influence of Tib. 1.3, plays more directly on the conceit of mistress as family member (see Antonín 1996: 22-4, and *ad* 3.2.13-14), as he imagines his mistress and her mother attending his funeral together; consider especially lines 11-14: *ante meum ueniat longos incompta capillos / et fleat ante meum maesta Naeaera rogum. / sed ueniat carae matris comitata dolore: / maereat haec genero, maereat illa uiro.*

departure. In other words, at the last moment he avoids letting his funeral fantasy become as implausible as that imagined at 1.1.61-8, and heads in the other direction instead, into the recollection of past events.

His recollection of Delia's consultation of the gods about omens relating to his journey (1.3.9-14), and of her prayers to Isis (23-6), though, flows naturally into his own prayers for his safe return. These then develop into a second fantasy: a vision of Delia thanking the goddess for the fulfilment of both their prayers (27-32). In place of the unfulfillable fantasy of Delia joining his mother and sister in mourning his death, Tibullus presents us with a relatively plausible picture of Delia's thanks for his safe return, consistent with her actual role, as his mistress:<sup>92</sup>

*ut mea uotiuas persoluens Delia uoces  
ante sacras lino tecta fores sedeat  
bisque die resoluta comas tibi dicere laudes  
insignis turba debeat in Pharia.* (1.3.29-32)

Contemplation of Delia's concern for him, as manifested in her superstitious fears on his behalf, has turned him from the chilling contemplation of his own mortality to the possibility of his return, and this pleasant scene. Note that it still involves a woman letting her hair down for his sake, but *ante sacras . . . fores*, rather than *ante sepulcra*, as his sister would have, had he died at home (1.3.8). This scenario is of course preferable for the speaker for several reasons, but not least because it allows him (and the reader) to contemplate the beauty of Delia's loose hair without the funereal atmosphere. The visual impact of the scene – which, in Gotoff's words, 'seems sensuous beyond the requirements of ritual' (1974: 243) – is emphasised by the description of Delia as *insignis* among Isis's Egyptian worshippers. The loose-haired Delia would indeed be conspicuous among such a crowd, because Isis's male

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<sup>92</sup> The cult of Isis was thought to be popular among courtesans of the type to which elegiac mistresses belong; see Heyob 1975: 111-19 (who demonstrates that this was probably an inaccurate stereotype). On the cult's popularity with women generally, and on aspects of the worship of Isis that are accurately reflected in the passage, adding realism, see Smith 1913: *ad* 1.3.23-4, 25, 30, 31; Turcan 1989: 90, 104-5; Pomeroy 1975: 217-26; Maltby 2002: *ad* 1.3.23-32.

worshippers shaved their heads, and her female worshippers bound their hair up in headdresses.<sup>93</sup> Delia's worship, in short, is a blend of Roman and foreign elements – she wears Egyptian-style linen clothes, but looses her hair like a Roman<sup>94</sup> – combined in such a way as to be as visually striking as possible, at the same time as recalling (in appearance) and inverting (in tone and context) the mourning rituals at the beginning of the poem. This fantasy, though still fairly realistic in the grand scheme, is beginning to show signs of wish-fulfilment on the speaker's part.

Tibullus wends his way through several more changes of topic as the poem continues – the Golden Age, before seafaring blighted men's lives (1.3.35-52); the different afterlives that await the pious in love, and those who sin against Venus (57-82) – but he concludes with a final vision of the loose-haired Delia, that sums up several of the themes and elements that have come before. He prays that while he is away, Delia might spend her time spinning wool, supervised in this virtuous and wifely duty by her old nurse, late into the night (1.3.83-8), and that he should find her this way when he finally returns:

*tunc ueniam subito, nec quisquam nuntiet ante,  
sed uidear caelo missus adesse tibi.  
tunc mihi, qualis eris longos turbata capillos,  
obuia nudato, Delia, curre pede. (1.3.89-92)*

The poem as a whole contains several echoes of the *Odyssey*,<sup>95</sup> for which the reader has been primed from the beginning by the setting, which Tibullus refers to as Phaeacia (1.3.3), alluding to its Homeric inhabitants, the Phaeacians, rather than by its contemporary name, Corcyra. Tibullus imagines himself, then, like Odysseus, returning home to a Penelope figure who has been chastely working wool in his absence, rather than accepting any other suitors. Delia's loose hair and bare feet are signs of virtuous simplicity, reinforcing the innocence of

<sup>93</sup> See Smith 1913: *ad loc.*; Bright 1978: 152; Maltby 2002: *ad loc.* For Isis-worshippers' hair and lack thereof, see Juv. 6.533; Mart. 12.29.19; Apul. *Met.* 11.10.1.

<sup>94</sup> Mills (1974: 228) notes the parallelism and poignancy of Tibullus imagining Delia worshipping foreign gods at home while he, abroad, thinks of his household gods (1.3.33-4).

<sup>95</sup> See Bright 1978: 16-37; Lee-Stecum 1998: 103-4; Maltby 2002: *ad* 1.3.3.

her occupation. The fact that her hair is not simply loose, but unkempt (*turbata*, 1.3.91), strengthens this impression of wifely faithfulness, suggesting that she has not simply been waiting patiently for Tibullus's return, but actively lamenting his absence.<sup>96</sup> However, her loose hair and bare feet are also suggestive of the appearance of worshippers, especially when we recall Delia's similar state of dress before the doors of the temple of Isis. Critics have suggested, given the idea that Tibullus, in his surprise appearance, would like to 'seem as if he has fallen from the sky' (1.3.90), that Delia's appearance makes the scene reminiscent of divine epiphanies.<sup>97</sup> In the context of the earlier scene of Delia's thanks to Isis, though, and the prayers on his part and Delia's that precede it (1.3.23-8), it is perhaps more fitting to imagine that Tibullus wants his return to be (or appear to Delia to be) the magical answer to those prayers.<sup>98</sup> His wishes for his return, after all, relate not only to the virtuous state in which he would like to find Delia, but her enthusiasm to greet him; he hopes she will run to meet him (*curre*, 1.3.92), without bothering to tie up or even tidy her hair, or put on sandals or slippers. The distinction is perhaps a fine one, but imagining Tibullus as the gods' response to Delia's prayers, rather than as an apparition that is divine in itself, puts more emphasis on Delia's desire for his return. As in the scene of her thanksgiving to Isis, the sight of her long, loose hair also, of course, adds visual appeal to the fantasy. Given the domestic, evening setting, that appeal is in this case magnified by the same connotations of intimacy discussed above in relation to Prop. 1.3 and 2.29a. The resulting scenario is at once sufficiently magical and allusive to myth and legend to comfortably follow the detours into the Golden Age and the underworld that have intervened, and domestic and intimate enough to hide its own implausibility. It matches the image of Delia's thanksgiving to Isis both

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<sup>96</sup> Compare the images of pining lovers discussed above, pg. 203-8.

<sup>97</sup> Palmer 1977: 7-8; Lee-Stecum 1998: 129; Maltby 2002: *ad loc.* There is value also in Campbell's observation (1973: 155-6) that Tibullus's late-night homecoming, to a Delia who appears almost as if she has been roused from sleep, suggests a dream or a visit from a ghost.

<sup>98</sup> The parallel examples that Maltby cites (Ov. *Ars* 1.43; [Tib.] 3.19.13; Livy, 8.9.10) all describe someone being sent by the gods, rather than epiphanies of the gods themselves.

visually and thematically, but takes the speaker on the final step from that only somewhat idealised vision of his homecoming, to one that (like the picture of his funeral in 1.1) is realistic in all its details, but fantastical in its central premise – that Delia is the Penelope to his Odysseus.<sup>99</sup> The progression from the grim and realistic images of lonely death and the funeral he might have had to this happy and comforting picture reflects (and does much to create) an overall movement in the poem from pessimism to optimism, and from darkness and death (*Mors nigra . . . Mors atra*, 1.3.4-5), to light and a new beginning (*Aurora . . . candida*, 1.3.93-4).<sup>100</sup>

Tibullus, then, in 1.1 and 1.3, takes the idea of the lover's mistress participating in the formal aspects of his funeral, explored tentatively in book one of Propertius, and expands on it, exploring the interaction between the emotional atmosphere of ritual mourning (and of other, complementary scenes of religious and familial devotion) and the expectations, realistic and idealised, attached to his relationship with Delia. Propertius, in books two through four, makes further developments on the same imagery, and continues to explore the possibilities it presents, by applying it to a broader range of scenarios.

At 2.9.9-14, Propertius puts the image into a mythical context, using Briseis's mourning for Achilles as an *exemplum* of the kind of devotion Cynthia has failed to demonstrate. The picture of Briseis in Prop. 2.9, like that of the dead Patroclus at 2.8.33-4 or the pining Calypso at 1.15.9-14, discussed above, gains in impact from an echo of Homer, as her mourning in this poem resembles her mourning for Patroclus in the *Iliad*. Both scenes begin with her embracing the dead body and striking her face with her hands (2.9.9-10; *Il.* 19.284-5).<sup>101</sup> While, in the *Iliad*, these actions are followed by a lament (19.286-302), in

<sup>99</sup> Compare also his vision of life in the countryside with Delia at 1.5.19-36.

<sup>100</sup> See Campbell 1973: 155-6; Mills 1974: 232-3; Maltby 2002: *ad* 93-4. On the progression from images of the real Delia, through an idealised but realistic Delia, to a fantasy Delia, see Bright 1978: 149-53.

<sup>101</sup> It seems likely that in Hellenistic poetry Briseis became more of a romantic figure than she is in the *Iliad* (see Jacobson 1971: 336; Papanghelis 1987: 118); this may be another source of influence for this passage, as well as for later treatments of her story (Ov. *Her.* 3; Quint. Smyrn. 3.551-81).

Prop. 2.9, they are followed by a more formal funeral: Briseis washes Achilles's body (2.9.11-12), dirties her hair (*foedauit comas*, 13), and takes up his bones after he has been cremated (13-14). None of these actions is anachronistic, or otherwise inappropriate to its setting; there are, for example, plenty of instances of the tearing or dirtying of the hair in mourning and distress in the *Iliad*.<sup>102</sup> Briseis's actions are, however, carefully chosen to be equally applicable to the contemporary context in which Propertius addresses Cynthia, and thus, at the same time, to suggest other scenes of imagined mourning in elegy. The point of the *exemplum*, then, also remains applicable: in the heroic age, one's mistress could be relied upon to be faithful enough to perform these wifely services, but the modern, Roman Cynthia cannot (2.9.17-18). It is particularly important for the effectiveness of the *exemplum* that Briseis is not Achilles's wife, but is as devoted to him as if she were, and several factors encourage the reader to take note of this aspect of the situation. The fact that the preceding *exemplum* is Penelope, who is Ulysses's actual wife (2.9.3-8), suggests a comparison between the two. Reminiscence of the aforementioned passage from Homer, too, reinforces Briseis's exact status: in her lament, she remembers that Patroclus used to comfort her with the thought that she might one day be married to Achilles (*Il.* 19.295-9). Lines 15-16 (*cum tibi nec Peleus aderat nec caerulea mater, / Scyria nec uiduo Deidamia toro*) are perhaps spurious, but they also emphasise the exceptional fact that Achilles is formally mourned by his concubine rather than by his mother, father, or wife.<sup>103</sup> This aspect of the *exemplum* makes it possible for Propertius to put a new spin on the idea of an elegiac lover's mistress mourning him like a widow. The precedent of Briseis's mourning for her lover in this formal way suggests that the unlikelihood of this fantasy situation coming true in the speaker's case is not the result of

<sup>102</sup> See *Il.* 10.15-6; 18.23-4; 22.77-8; 22.405-6. Even the horses of Achilles mourn in a similar way, at 23.283-4.

<sup>103</sup> Carutti suggests deleting the couplet; for reasons, see Heyworth 2007: 148. If it is an interpolation, however, the very fact that the interpolator has felt the need to explain why Briseis is taking up a role ordinarily reserved for family demonstrates the striking nature of her actions.

the unofficial nature of his relationship with his mistress, but of her faults of character.<sup>104</sup> If only she loved him to an appropriately mythic (and literary) degree – as, the implication is, he loves her – then his troubles would be over.

Mourning in a mythical *exemplum* is used in a similar way in Prop. 2.13, though to different purpose. There are two images of a woman mourning for her lover in the poem; the first is Propertius's vision of Cynthia's ideal behaviour at his own funeral (2.13.27-30), and the second, presented as an example for her to follow, is that of Venus at the side of the dead Adonis (2.13.55-6). The description of Cynthia's mourning forms part of Propertius's instructions for his funeral procession, which is to be free of any ostentatious show of wealth, or of status other than as a lover and poet (2.13.17-26). In the absence of insincere hired *praeficae*,<sup>105</sup> then, Propertius would like his bier followed by the authentically distraught Cynthia. But her mourning is the one aspect of his funeral in which he would not like to see moderation observed:

*tu uero nudum pectus lacerata sequeris,  
nec fueris nomen lassa uocare meum,  
osculaque in gelidis pones suprema labellis  
cum dabitur Syrio munere plenus onyx.* (2.13.27-30)

The description is, on one level, an exercise in one-upmanship over Tibullus, recalling his description of Delia's mourning at 1.1.61-8 in its context and details, but pulling out the stops, and placing more emphasis on the extravagant and/or darkly erotic aspects of women's mourning: rather than dissuade his mistress from scratching her face (compare Tib. 1.1.67-8), he encourages her to lacerate her bare breasts; she is to kiss him (compare Tib. 1.1.62), but his lips will be dead and cold.<sup>106</sup> But there is more than that going on here. As critics and commentators have pointed out, even before we reach the explicit reference to Venus and Adonis at the end of the poem, Propertius's description of his funeral, including Cynthia's

<sup>104</sup> On the trend in elegy of portraying the social and economic realities of a relationship with a courtesan as moral failings on her part, see James 2001.

<sup>105</sup> See above, n.75.

<sup>106</sup> On Prop. 2.13.27-30 and Tib. 1.1.61-8, see Papanghelis 1987: 64; Lyne 1998: 536-7.

mourning, is strongly suggestive of Bion's *Epitaphius Adonidis*.<sup>107</sup> As with Briseis's mourning in 2.9 (but in reverse), each detail remains appropriate to its context: all Cynthia's actions are those of a contemporary Roman mourner, albeit a particularly passionate one. But they are described in such a way as also to allude to Aphrodite's mourning, as described by Bion. Cynthia's breast-beating, for example, recalls Aphrodite's actions at lines 25-7 of the *Epitaphius*.<sup>108</sup> Her calling out of Propertius's name reflects the wailing customary at Roman funerals and the formal practice of *conclamatio*,<sup>109</sup> but, in its tirelessness, it also recalls Aphrodite's keening over the dead Adonis (23-4), and the poem's refrain, αἰάζω τὸν Ἄδωνιν. Kissing the deceased was, as we have seen, usual practice at a Roman funeral, but the specific detail that Propertius's lips will be cold recalls the emphasis that Bion places on Adonis's unresponsiveness to Aphrodite's kisses (11-14, 42-50). Propertius, like Adonis, is even to be anointed with Syrian perfume (77).<sup>110</sup> Several elements of the description (the baring of the breasts, the wailing, the perfume) also allude, in Propertius as in Bion, to aspects of the ritualised mourning of Adonis at the Adonia, which persisted into this period and beyond,<sup>111</sup> making the allusions immediate as well as literary.

One element both of the observance of the Adonia and of Bion's description of Aphrodite's mourning that is missing from Propertius's description of Cynthia's, though, is the loosing of the hair: Bion's Aphrodite rushes to Adonis's side with her braids undone (19-21). This detail does appear, however, in the second image of mourning in 2.13. It is only

<sup>107</sup> See Fantuzzi 1985: *ad u.*13; Papanghelis 1987: 64-9; Heyworth 1992: 55; Fantuzzi & Hunter 2004: 187-90. The reader has been primed to expect such literary references, by the allusive and self-consciously Callimachean aspects of the poem so far; see above, pg. 156.

<sup>108</sup> Ahrens, Fantuzzi, and Reed all emend lines 25-7 to make them refer to Venus beating her breast until it bleeds, rather than to Adonis's breast being stained by his own blood. There are too many difficulties with the lines as they appear in the MSS to discuss here, but see Reed 1997: *ad* 25-7 for a full discussion, including an explanation of the version that he prints (ἀμφὶ δὲ νιν μέλαν εἶμα παρ' ὀμφαλὸν ἄωρεῖτο, / στήθεα δ' ἐκ χειρῶν φοινίσσετο, τοὶ δ' ὑπὸ μαζοῖ / χιόνει τὸ πάροιθεν Ἀδώνιδι πορφύροντο), which I find convincing.

<sup>109</sup> See Dutsch 2008: 259; Hope 2009: 50; Šterbenc Erker 2011: 47. Compare Prop. 4.7.23.

<sup>110</sup> Συρίοισιν, too, is a conjecture, but a highly plausible replacement for the unmetrical μύροισιν; see Fantuzzi 1985 and Reed 1997: *ad u.* 77, and compare Theoc. *Id.* 15.114.

<sup>111</sup> See for example Sappho, fr. 140a (L-P); *Anth. Pal.* 5.53 (Dioscorides); Theoc. *Id.* 15.114, 135-6. On the cult of Adonis and the relationship between the Adonia and Bion's poem, see Reed 1997: 15-26. It is perhaps also relevant that the death of Adonis was often used as a motif on Roman sarcophagi; see Koortbojian 1995: 23-62.

right, Propertius explains to Cynthia, to grieve for one's departed lover (2.13.51-2); the example he calls upon to prove his point, appropriately, is Venus's mourning for Adonis:

*testis qui niueum quondam percussit Adonin  
uenantem Idalio uertice durus aper;  
illis formosum lauisse paludibus, illic  
diceris effusa tu, Venus, isse coma. (2.13.53-6)<sup>112</sup>*

This picture, in a sense, completes that of Cynthia's mourning, which, in turn, completes this one; taken together, the two scenes, connected and enriched by the allusions that both make to the *Epitaphius Adonidis*, create one multifaceted picture of the kind of devotion Propertius expects Cynthia to display after his death. It is to be that of a Roman widow, and a genuinely distraught one at that, but it is also that of the goddess of love – the ultimate *exemplum* for Propertius's own 'goddess'. The unlikelihood of one's mistress mourning like a real widow, which has been central to most of the other examples examined thus far, is here overwritten by the mythical precedent provided by Venus's mourning, and becomes insignificant.

Cynthia's mourning is to be literary and poetic, like all the other aspects of Propertius's funeral and burial; whereas, in the case of the half-contemporary, half-mythic/literary actions described in 1.17, the fanciful and poetic aspect of Cynthia's mourning had contributed to the overall atmosphere of doubt and disappointment, here, where the literary and contemporary elements are fully fused, it has the opposite function. Whether the 'real' Cynthia, who will grow old and grey, will persist in remembering and loving the dead Propertius remains in doubt.<sup>113</sup> The Cynthia of his imagination, though – the one depicted in lines 27-30 – will at least persist, melded as she is with the Venus of lines 53-6, who is doubly immortal: in that she is divine, but also (and, in context, perhaps more significantly) because she has been immortalised by Bion, and now, along with Cynthia, by Propertius.<sup>114</sup> The disappointment

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<sup>112</sup> On the text of this passage, and aspects of its interpretation, including further allusions to Bion, see Heyworth 1992: 57-9.

<sup>113</sup> See above, pg. 155-7, on 2.13.39-40.

<sup>114</sup> The final couplet, which emphasises Propertius's mortality, and especially that of his voice (*sed frustra mutos reuocabis, Cynthia, manes: / nam mea quid poterunt ossa minuta loqui?* 2.13.57-8), reinforces the

and ruefulness that characterised the descriptions of Cynthia's mourning in 1.17, 1.19, and, by implied contrast with Briseis, in 2.9, have ceded to at least a certain degree of hope, born of Propertius's confidence in the power of his poetry, even if this hope is balanced by doubt at other points in the poem.

References to Propertius's death and Cynthia's mourning him like a widow from this point on are briefer, but the idea, planted in 2.9 and especially in 2.13, that the central feature of this scenario need not be its improbability in realistic terms, but can instead be its enactment of mythic/literary shows of devotion, informs the instances that follow. The extraordinary nature of the image remains, but this has now been reinterpreted as something to recommend it, rather than to hint at its emptiness. Consider the sentiments that Propertius expresses at the end of 2.24. Favouring rich and noble lovers may seem like a good idea now, but, he explains to Cynthia, their apparent affection will not outlive her death; they will not see that she is buried properly, as he would (2.24.49-51). It would be better, though, for her to mourn him: *sed tu potius precor in me / demissis plangas pectora nuda comis* (2.24.51-2). The point is of course, in part, that he would rather die than see Cynthia die, but the idea of her mourning him also has an appeal of its own, separate from this sentiment.<sup>115</sup> The aspects of Cynthia's imagined mourning that are singled out for this brief description – her bare breasts, her loose hair – have a distinctly erotic undertone, betraying the speaker's interest in the visual appeal of the scenario. Note, though, that both details also recall the scenes of mourning in 2.13. The idea that Cynthia might mourn for Propertius in this way communicates the hope that, however she is acting at present, she may yet come around and favour his brand of love in the end, even if she does so only upon his death.<sup>116</sup> This is not so much optimism as persistent self-delusion used as a persuasive tactic, but in any case it relies

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contrast, implied in the allusions to Bion and to the Adonia, between the permanence of the poet's own death, and Adonis's yearly reappearance to be mourned afresh.

<sup>115</sup> 'For the mistress to die before her lover is preposterous, only aesthetically, not morally so,' Papanghelis 1987: 139. See also Houghton 2011: 64-5.

<sup>116</sup> For this idea as one that comforts the speaker, rather than fuelling his disillusionment, see also 3.16.21-4.

on the same suppression of the inherent implausibility of the image established in 2.9 and 2.13.

The last two Propertian images of women's mourning we shall be examining (before moving on to Ovid's parodic takes on the idea) have less direct relation to the speaker's relationship with Cynthia: they are neither images of her mourning, nor *exempla* for her to follow. Nonetheless, they rely for their effectiveness on the precedents built up by the examples we have seen so far. In the first, reflecting on a night spent drinking and making love to Cynthia, Propertius ponders how different life would be if everyone chose to dedicate himself to love and leisure:

*non ferrum crudele neque esset bellica nauis  
nec nostra Actiacum uerteret ossa mare,  
nec totiens propriis circum oppugnata triumphis  
lassa foret crines soluere Roma suos.* (2.15.43-6)

The first couplet is clear enough, and subversive in its implications: instead of blaming Antony and his luxurious life with Cleopatra for the deaths at Actium, Propertius essentially blames Augustus's moral disapproval of their conduct.<sup>117</sup> The curious description in the next couplet, of Rome 'besieged on all sides by her own triumphs', seems to allude to victorious generals who, made too powerful by their successes, become a threat to Rome itself: Marius, Sulla, Julius Caesar, or Pompey.<sup>118</sup> The idea that Roma is 'tired of letting her hair down', then, suggests that their warring has kept her in such a constant state of mourning for her dead citizens that she is exhausted. The image would be an evocative one for contemporary readers, for whom such dishevelled mourning by actual mothers and widows would have been a common enough spectacle. The repeated dishevelment of this personification of the state also acts as an effective symbol for the disorder and instability resulting from successive civil wars that Rome had been experiencing over the last several decades. Especially coming

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<sup>117</sup> See Nethercut 1971; Griffin 1977: 19; Stahl 1985: 227-9; and (with some reservations about the tone of the passage) Gale 1997: 81-2.

<sup>118</sup> See Rothstein 1920, Bailey 1956, Richardson 1976: *ad loc.*; Hohenwallner 2001: 43-4.

immediately after such an unflattering allusion to Actium, the idea that this image describes Roma's current state, rather than one from which she has now been released, associates Augustus with the perpetuation of civil war, rather than with putting an end to it.<sup>119</sup> The use of the word *lassa* in the context of lamentation, meanwhile, coming so soon after 2.13 (*nec fueris nomen lassa uocare meum*, 2.13.28), draws a parallel between this scene of mourning and the ones in that poem, and adds another dimension to the allegory. By contrast with Cynthia's (and, by association, Venus's) idealised, tireless mourning in 2.13, Roma's exhaustingly repetitive mourning, which is so persistent not because of the strength of her devotion, but because of the staggering number of dead 'sons' she has to mourn, seems all the more pathetic.

Reminiscence of and contrast with earlier scenes of elegiac mistresses mourning also contribute to the effect of Prop 3.13, but with the opposite purpose: not to make a funeral scene more pathetic, but to idealise it further. This poem, like several others in book three, is a generalised reflection on love and life in contemporary Rome. An attack on the morals of Roman women, it is in part devoted to comparing their greed and their corruption by a desire for luxuries to the devotion of Indian wives (3.13.15-24) and the simplicity of love in the age before wealth (3.13.25-50). The former passage is of most concern to us here, as it consists of a depiction of the practice of *suttee*, which is made more pointed by comparison and contrast with Roman funeral practices, and by allusion to earlier elegiac funeral scenes. The Indian wives stand around their husband's pyre, with their hair loosed (3.13.17-18), and are so eager to immolate themselves that it becomes a contest (3.13.19-22). As Heckel and Yardley (1981) describe, the practice is recorded in other ancient sources, in terms similar enough as to suggest that they were working from a common source, and/or influencing each

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<sup>119</sup> Contrast Horace's association of Augustus with the cessation of civil war, and the transfer of hostility to foreign enemies (*Carm.* 1.2; 1.12.49-60; 1.21.13-16; 1.35.29-40; 3.14.1-16; 4.5; 4.15).

other. Of the sources they discuss,<sup>120</sup> though, only Propertius describes the widows as letting their hair loose like Roman mourners (*uxorum fusis stat pia turba comis*, 3.13.18). In fact, the only other sources to mention the women's level of dress (Diodorus and Jerome) state that they put on their best clothes, as if for a wedding, suggesting an appearance opposite to that of a Roman mourner. In Diodorus, the loser in the competition tears at her hair, but this is to lament not the death of her husband, but her inability to join him.<sup>121</sup> It seems, then, that Propertius is intentionally Romanising the description. This makes the Indian widows' actions seem less like a foreign, reverse image of the familiar elegiac fantasy funeral scene, and more like a hyperbolic version of it. This impression is strengthened by the erotic edge given to the description – an element we have seen in several elegiac scenes of mourning, especially in Propertius. This is produced not only by the image of the widows' loose hair, but by the suggested parallel between joining one's husband on his pyre, and joining him in an embrace: the widows jump into the pyre face first, and end up lying not next to, but on their husbands, face to face (*pectora flammae praebent, / imponuntque suis ora perusta uiris*, 3.13.21-2). Though the context is generalised, then, its evocation of the imagery and themes of more specific earlier funeral fantasies adds to its effectiveness; when Propertius concludes his description with the statement that Rome has no such Penelopes and Evadnes (3.13.23-4),<sup>122</sup> we know from these earlier passages, all of which are imagined, and most of which have the idea either of their implausibility or their exceptionality as a central element, that he is quite right.

By charting the various instances of women's dishevelled mourning in Propertius and

<sup>120</sup> Of most relevance are Diod. Sic. 19.33.1-34.6; Cic. *Tusc. Disp.* 5.78; Val. Max. 2.6.14; Jerome, *Adu. Iou.* 1.311.

<sup>121</sup> ἡ μὲν ἀποτυχοῦσα τῆς κρίσεως ἀπῆει μετὰ κλαυθμοῦ, καταρρήξασα τὸ περὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν διαδήμα καὶ, τὰς τρίχας σπαράσσουσα, καθαπερὶ τινος συμφορᾶς μεγάλης προσηγγελημένης. ἡ δὲ ἐπὶ τῇ νίκῃ περιχαρῆς ἀπῆει πρὸς τὴν πυρᾶν στεφανομένη μὲν μίτραις ὑπὸ τῶν οἰκείων γυναικῶν, κεκοσμημένη δὲ διαπρεπῶς ὥσπερ εἰς τινα γάμον προεπέμπετο ὑπὸ τῶν συγγενῶν (Diod. Sic. 19.34.3).

<sup>122</sup> On Evadne's self-immolation presented as an example to the unreliable Cynthia, at 1.15.21-2, see above, pg. 26.

Tibullus, then, we can discern a distinct progression and creative one-upmanship in the ways in which the two poets use the image. In book one of Propertius, the image of the lover's mistress mourning him like a widow, which seems to have been rather innovative, is presented in a tentative way, and primarily to express the speaker's doubts and fears about his mistress's love. Tibullus latches onto the image, but alters its emphasis, using it, in 1.1, to suggest the nature of his own love. He retains the implication of the image's implausibility, though, as is seen in 1.3, where the realistic image of his mother and sister's mourning takes its place, and images of Delia loosing her hair in gestures of devotion to him (in happier circumstances) start to appear only as the poem drifts into fantasy. Propertius, in his later books, continues this process of reinterpretation and innovation, through application of the same imagery to different contexts, reference to scenes of mythic mourning in earlier literature, and emphasis on the scenario's exceptionality rather than its implausibility.

#### Part 4: Dishevelled Mourning in Ovid

As one might expect, given the progression described above, Ovid takes the image of dishevelled mourning a step further, exaggerating and highlighting certain of the features of his predecessors' funeral scenes in such a way as to bring out their funny side. In *Am.* 2.6, he comments on the implausibility of elegiac funeral scenes by applying their imagery (including that of hair-tearing) to a funeral for Corinna's pet parrot; and at *Ars* 3.431-2, he plays on the eroticised elements of such scenes by suggesting to his female pupils that the funeral of one's old lover is a good place to advertise for a new one. The incongruity of these parodic funeral scenes only magnifies the effect of their humour, by increasing its shock value. But they do not ridicule the elegiac precedents they evoke, *per se*. Instead, their humour serves to make us look differently at themes and images that we have become accustomed to approaching in particular ways, revealing the workings of elegy's tropes in a

self-referential, tongue-in-cheek way, rather than a negatively critical one.

In *Am.* 2.6, the speaker encourages the birds summoned to the parrot's funeral to mourn in human style, as best they can (2.6.3-6): to beat their breasts with their wings and scratch their cheeks with their claws; to tear at their feathers, in the absence of hair (*horrida pro maestis lanietur pluma capillis*, 2.6.5);<sup>123</sup> and to sing dirges, since they cannot play *tubae*. This anthropomorphisation is presented with a veneer of seriousness, but is made ridiculous by its emphasis on the obvious differences between the birds and real human mourners, and by the resulting contrast between tone and subject matter. All this economically establishes the tongue-in-cheek nature of the lament, and the poem continues in this mode.<sup>124</sup> The result is a parody *epicedion*, gaining much of its humour from the fact that it follows the structure and conventions of a lament for a deceased person, rather than for a deceased pet (though the latter was a known genre of epigrams) – including even an account of the parrot's last words ('*Corinna, uale*', 2.6.48), since he could, of course, speak.<sup>125</sup> As well as being a simple source of humour, though, the conceit of treating the parrot and his mourners as quasi-human, beginning with their human-style mourning, allows the poem to recall earlier elegiac funeral scenes, especially Tib. 1.1.61-8 and Prop. 2.13.17-38. Critics have pointed out links throughout *Am.* 2.6 that encourage the reader to consider the parrot a kind of stand-in for the lover-poet, noting the emphasis placed on his desire to please his mistress (2.6.19, 48, 61), his extraordinary verbal capabilities (2.6.18, 23-4, 29-30, 37-8, 47-8, 62), the Callimachean smallness of his tomb (2.6.59-60; compare Prop. 2.1.72; 2.13.31-4), and the suitability of his epitaph to an elegiac poet (*colligor ex ipso dominae placuisse sepulcro. / ora fuere mihi plus*

<sup>123</sup> Though it seems unlikely that this is what Ovid is referring to, it is interesting to note that lonely, bereaved, or stressed parrots can start to compulsively pull out their own feathers; see Seibert 2006.

<sup>124</sup> See Thomas 1965: 602; Frécaut 1972: 344-5. The establishment of this tone is also helped by the poem's skewed allusions to Catull. 2-3; see Ferguson 1960: 352-3; Frécaut 1972: 178-9; Davis 1981: 2476-7; Hinds 1987: 7; Myers 1990: 368.

<sup>125</sup> On 2.6 as a parody *epicedion*, see Thomas 1965: 600; Boyd 1987: 206; Myers 1990: 374; McKeown 1998: 108-10. There are several Hellenistic epigrams on dead pets and other animals in the *Palatine Anthology* (7.189-94, 197-203, 207-9, 211-15); on these and their relation to *Am.* 2.6 (and Catull. 3), see Boyd 1987: 201, n.6.

*ae docta loqui*, 2.6.61-2).<sup>126</sup> In the light of these cues, the perfect funeral that Ovid imagines for the parrot emphasises the contrast between the real and the ideal in the earlier elegiac funeral scenes to which it alludes. At bottom, the type of formal mourning by their respective mistresses that Tibullus and Propertius hope for is about as likely to be enacted as the ridiculously anthropomorphised mourning of the parrot's friends: all are poetic fantasies, divorced from the 'reality' of their narratives.<sup>127</sup> It is characteristic of Ovid, though, to express the unlikelihood of one's mistress acting as one's widow through a parodic scene which, because of the nature of the deceased, naturally lacks seriousness, rather than through rueful or even hopeful visions of his own death and burial.<sup>128</sup>

*Ars* 3.431-2, another parodic reference to elegiac funeral scenes, presents an interesting comparison, and is rich in implications, despite its brevity. To crown an extended list of public buildings and events at which women might wish make themselves conspicuous, in order to attract lovers (*Ars* 3.381-432), Ovid suggests that one can even do so by loosing one's hair and weeping publicly at the funeral of a dead lover: *funere saepe uiri uir quaeritur: ire solutis / crinibus et fletus non tenuisse decet* (3.431-2). As often in the *Ars*, depending on how it is understood, the idea manages either to parody elegiac ideals or to stealthily subvert Augustan moral reform. Given that, as we have seen, only actual family members were expected to mourn in this way, Ovid is skating dangerously close to the idea that his intended audience includes widows: a category of women protected by the *lex Iulia de adulteriis coercendis*.<sup>129</sup> The ambiguity of the word *uir*, which can mean either 'husband' or 'lover', reinforces this implication; it is obvious from the context that the *uir* being sought

<sup>126</sup> See Parker 1969: 94; Boyd 1987: 200-4 and 1997: 170-9; Myers 1990; Houghton 2000; Dietrich 2002: 99-100. Interestingly, of the twenty-one epigrams for dead animals listed in the previous note, fifteen focus on the creature's voice, as a source of pleasure to its owner, or as now silenced by death. Only *Anth. Pal.* 7.213 (Archias) makes an explicit comparison to the songs of poets, but if such a comparison was understood to be implied by the other epigrams, this might explain why such a large proportion of them address pet cicadas and locusts; on these insects as symbols of poetic immortality, see above, pg. 171.

<sup>127</sup> See Ramsby 2005: 369-71, 373, 375 on the parrot's epitaph.

<sup>128</sup> See Frécaut 1972: 344-5.

<sup>129</sup> On this law, see above, pg. 69-70; on the stereotype of the merry widow, see also above, pg. 177, n.124.

in line 431 is a lover, but the status of the dead *uir* is less clear. Even if the reader gives Ovid the benefit of the doubt, and assumes that he is referring to women exempt from the law, mourning at the funerals of their unwed lovers, the passage remains strongly irreverent, this time towards earlier elegy. As we have seen, in Propertius and Tibullus, the image of one's mistress in dishevelled mourning at one's funeral is consistently depicted as an ideal to be wished for precisely because it demonstrates her full reciprocation of one's affections, and suggests that her love and faithfulness have extended beyond her lover's death. In Ovid's version, the act is stripped of these connotations of faithfulness and devotion, and its implications are reversed completely. This reversal is made possible, though, by a feature of the very scenes that *Ars* 3.431-2 parodies. We have seen how the erotic appeal of certain acts of mourning, the loosing of the hair among them, often adds a pleasing visual element to elegiac funeral fantasies. In these cases, however, this visual appeal is portrayed as a pleasant side-effect of women's mourning, not its purpose. Ovid's reinterpretation suggests the opposite: having already explained to his pupils about the attractive potential of artificial dishevelment, and noted that women know how to cry prettily on command (*Ars* 3.153-8, 291-2), he suggests that they take advantage of the unique opportunity presented by a lover's funeral to apply both these principles at once, and in public. The *praeceptor*, as usual presenting his outrageous way of construing lovers' motives as the product of special understanding, suggests that, in hoping for their beloveds to appear in a state of attractive dishevelment at their funerals, the speakers of Tib. 1.1 or Prop. 2.13 and 2.24b were only helping their mistresses to replace them all the sooner.

We should not assume, though, based on the light-hearted nature of these two examples, that Ovid is incapable of exploring similar themes and imagery in a serious, or at least relatively serious, manner. In his lament for Tibullus, *Am.* 3.9, I would argue that he does precisely this. The poem's character as a lament is admittedly complicated by frequent

allusions to Tibullus's own poetry, some of which, as we shall see, are distinctly humorous.<sup>130</sup> The feeling, expressed by some critics,<sup>131</sup> that such parody is in poor taste in a tribute to a poet whom Ovid professedly admires, has led others to take the lament as essentially ironic. Cahoon (1984: 31-5) and Perkins (1993), for example, suggest that 3.9 is critical of Tibullus, both as a character in his own verse and as a representative of the previous generation of elegy. If the poem contains humorous re-imaginings of passages that were originally serious, they argue, this must indicate criticism of Tibullus's persona, his poetry, or of earlier elegy more generally, if they are not to indicate gaucherie on the part of Ovid the poet. These are, however, not the only two options; I think it far more probable that the allusions to Tibullus point instead to affectionate parody, and that *Am.* 3.9 is a sincere (and effective) tribute.<sup>132</sup>

To support this interpretation, I shall examine three separate images of dishevelled mourning occurring in the poem, which all, with increasing specificity, allude to Tibullus's poetry: the divine personification of Elegy is called upon to loose her hair in mourning (3.9.3), Amor's tears fall into the locks that hang loose on his neck (3.9.11), and Tibullus's sister appears in a state of dishevelment at his funeral (3.9.52).<sup>133</sup> In the first, Elegy is characterised as Tibullus's honorary mother, who is to follow the precedent of other divine mothers of mortal sons in her mourning:

*Memnona si mater, mater plorauit Achillem,  
et tangunt magnas tristia fata deas,  
flebilis, indignos, Elegia, solue capillos:  
a, nimis ex uero nunc tibi nomen erit!  
ille tui uates operis, tua fama, Tibullus  
ardet in exstructo, corpus inane, rogo. (3.9.1-6)*

Tibullus had, of course, imagined his flesh-and-blood mother mourning for him at Tib. 1.3.5-

<sup>130</sup> Taylor (1970: 475-7) gives a fairly complete list of these allusions.

<sup>131</sup> Take, for example, Thomas's view (1965: 599): 'The affectations or "conceits" of II, 6 are more appropriate, or at least less offensive, than those which sometimes mar III, 9'.

<sup>132</sup> For interpretations of 3.9 as affectionate rather than critical parody, see Taylor 1970; Frécaut 1972: 340-5 (a particularly sensitive reading); Boyd 1997: 179-87; Ball 2002.

<sup>133</sup> It is possible to see this frequency of hair references in itself as a nod from one poet who makes heavy use of hair imagery to another; consider the fact that Tib. 1.3 (discussed above), a poem repeatedly alluded to in *Am.* 3.9, also contains three prominent images of loose hair.

6, and that passage is to be alluded to more directly at *Am.* 3.9.49-50. In the meantime, though, letting Elegy fulfil her role, both as his mother and his mourner, acts as a powerful compliment to Tibullus, suggesting the inseparability of the genre as a whole from his conception of it. The image of Elegy loosing her hair, meanwhile, grounds and literalises the idea of her mourning, giving it added force; she is not a disembodied abstraction, asked to mourn in a general sense, but a fully personified figure, asked to mourn in a concrete and human manner. The effect of the image is magnified when we remember that Elegy personified features centrally in *Am.* 3.1. In that poem, her finely adorned hair is the first aspect of her appearance to be described (*uenit odoratos Elegia nexa capillos*, 3.1.7) and her dress and manner overall (3.1.7-10) communicate the *leuitas* that she herself cites as her most characteristic feature (3.1.42-3).<sup>134</sup> The metrical pattern of 3.1.7 and the placement of *Elegia* and *capillos* in the line are echoed in 3.9.3. As Elegy is urged to undo her hair as a sign of grief, then, we are encouraged to recall how little it (and, therefore, she) is fitted to such a sad role – hence *indignos capillos*. Ovid does acknowledge the mournful character that was typically ascribed to elegy as a genre, referring to her as *flebilis*, and giving a nod to the traditional etymology of her name (3.9.3-4).<sup>135</sup> His tone of resignation in doing so, however, with the sad exclamation *a*, and the observation that Elegy’s name is ‘*now* all too accurate’, make us remember that, for Ovid’s Elegy, as depicted in 3.1, this is indeed exceptional behaviour. Still, it is hard to see what aspect of the description Cahoon (1984: 31) finds ‘disproportionately hysterical’. On the contrary, the act of mourning that Ovid urges Elegy to perform was part of the usual vocabulary of grief, and is all the more appropriate here because it visually recalls the dishevelled women appearing in both of Tibullus’s own visions of his ideal funeral: Delia, at Tib. 1.1.67-8 (the Elegy of *Am.* 3.1, remember, is depicted much as the elegists depict their mistresses), and the speaker’s sister, at 1.3.8.

<sup>134</sup> On *Am.* 3.1, see the introductory chapter, pg. 1-4.

<sup>135</sup> The word ἔλεγος was thought to be derived from ἔλεγειν; on the perception of elegy as a mournful genre, with its origins in funerary lament (cf. Hor. *Ars Poet.* 75), see Luck 1969: 25-7; Yardley 1996: 267.

The mourning of Amor and Venus, that follows (3.9.7-16), affirms the amorous aspect of Tibullus's dual identity as lover and poet, but the poetic aspect also remains central, as is made clear by references to specific passages from his works. Amor, in his distress at the loss of such a devotee, has broken his bow and extinguished his torch (*Am.* 3.9.7-8), just as Tibullus had asked him to do at *Tib.* 2.6.15-16, in exasperation at his own slavery to Nemesis. Perkins (1993: 461) sees the change of tone and context from Tibullus's use of the image to Ovid's as a sign of critical parody: as 'an ironic and almost perverse comment on Tibullus' own poetic conceit'. The irony inherent in the fact that Tibullus's own death was the precondition of the granting of his request at *Tib.* 2.6.15-16, though, can just as easily be understood as quite poignant, and as another compliment: if only Tibullus's death can stop Amor from firing his arrows, this characterises him as the ultimate lover.<sup>136</sup> As for the depiction of Amor himself, his wings hang limply, he beats his breast and weeps (3.9.9-12), and his tears fall into the locks of hair that hang down onto his neck (*excipiunt lacrimas sparsi per colla capilli*, 3.9.11). It is, I think, significant that Amor's hair is so long; it subtly suggests that we are to imagine not a small boy – baby Cupids are generally depicted with short curls – but a youth, looking more like the so-called Eros of Centocelle (Bartman 2002: fig. 11.7) than a *putto*.<sup>137</sup> Given that, uniquely among the extant elegists, Tibullus devotes three of the ten elegies of his first book to a homosexual relationship, and focuses a fair amount of attention on his beloved Marathus's hair,<sup>138</sup> we can perhaps see in this depiction of Amor a sort of stand-in for Marathus, anticipating the appearance of Delia and Nemesis later

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<sup>136</sup> See Reed 1997: 261-2. As he explains, the image is also one of several references in *Am.* 3.9 to Bion's *Epitaphius Adonidis* (lines 80-2), discussed above in reference to *Prop.* 2.13. If, as Reed suggests, Ovid does consciously liken *Am.* 3.9 to pseudo-Moschus's lament for Bion ([Mosch.] 3), which also plays on themes and characters from the dead poet's works, then this argues further for a 'sincere' reading of the poem. An extra dimension is added to both passages by the fact that mourning Cupids were a common motif on sarcophagi; see Stuveras 1969: 33-40.

<sup>137</sup> As Stuveras explains (1969: 171), the hair of *putti* (including Cupids) in Roman art tends to mimic that of contemporary children; at this period, this will generally have meant short hair. The hair of adolescent Cupids, on the other hand, tends to hang onto their shoulders in long locks. Compare Stuveras 1969: fig. 27 and fig. 28; see also Bartman 2002: 257-8.

<sup>138</sup> On Marathus's hair, see above, pg. 46-51 and 199-201. Marathus, like Amor, also weeps readily; see *Tib.* 1.8.67-8; 1.9.37-8.

on (3.9.53-8); this would give his mourning added significance. In any case, we might at least see the mention of Amor's long hair as a nod to Tibullus's liking for images of youthful, long-haired gods.<sup>139</sup> Cahoon (1984: 31) and Perkins (1993: 461) find Amor's mourning exaggerated, and therefore ridiculous. However, it is no more exaggerated than Cynthia's at Prop. 2.13.27-30, or indeed Delia's at Tib. 1.1.61-8 (remember, Tibullus imagines that she will have to be prevented from tearing at her face with her nails), and no one suggests that their passionate grief is meant to be a joke. Instead, just as Elegy's mourning suggests the inseparability of Tibullus from the idea of elegiac poetry, Amor's mourning, along with Venus's, which follows (*nec minus est confusa Venus moriente Tibullo / quam iuueni rupit cum ferus inguen aper*, 3.9.15-16),<sup>140</sup> suggests his inseparability from the idea of elegiac love.<sup>141</sup>

The third image of dishevelled mourning in the poem is the most direct allusion of the three. At least things are better this way, Ovid reflects, than if Tibullus really had died in Phaeacia (3.9.47-8, echoing Tib. 1.3.3-4); as it is, his mother and sister *are* here to mourn him:

*hic certe madidos fugientis pressit ocellos  
mater et in cineres ultima dona tulit;  
hic soror in partem misera cum matre doloris  
uenit inornatas dilaniata comas. (Am. 3.9.49-52)*

The description is a fulfilment of the wishes for his funeral that Tibullus had expressed at 1.3.5-8 (discussed above), down to the offerings made to his ashes, and his sister's dishevelled mourning.<sup>142</sup> Where Tibullus had shied away from including Delia in the description of his funeral in 1.3, opting for a realistic scene to match the dark and fearful tone

<sup>139</sup> See Tib. 1.4.37-8; 1.7.51-2; 2.3.12, 23-6; 2.5.8, 121. On Tibullus's enthusiasm for the image, see Smith 1913: *ad* 2.3.12, Maltby 2002: *ad* 2.3.23-4.

<sup>140</sup> This is reminiscent of Prop. 2.13.53-6, and evokes its theme of physical mortality contrasted with poetic immortality.

<sup>141</sup> Ovid reuses the image of the bedraggled Amor at *Ex Pont.* 3.3.13-22; see Armstrong 2005: 157-8, and below, pg. 241.

<sup>142</sup> For a fuller list of parallels between the passages, see Huskey 2005: 373-4.

of the passage as a whole, and to contrast with the more idealised description at Tib. 1.1.61-8, Ovid conflates the two scenes, and builds on them, having not only Delia but Nemesis join Tibullus's mother and sister at his burial (3.9.53-8). This goes about as smoothly as one might imagine, with Delia and Nemesis arguing over which of them Tibullus loved best, and Nemesis taunting her predecessor by transferring Tibullus's words at 1.1.60 (*et teneam moriens deficiente manu*) from Delia to herself, in the poem's most direct quotation from Tibullus's works (*me tenuit moriens deficiente manu*, *Am.* 3.9.58).<sup>143</sup> There is a shift in tone between 3.9.47-52 and 53-8, but this shift need not be interpreted as quite as sudden and jarring as critics often take it.<sup>144</sup> In both halves of the passage, there is humour in the fact that the speaker is taking Tibullus's poetry absolutely literally, and ignoring any distinction between poet and persona, or between the contexts of individual poems. On the surface level – the lamentation of Ovid's lover-persona for Tibullus's lover-persona – the fulfilment of his wishes for his funeral at Tib. 1.3.5-8 and the *consolatio* attached to it are as serious as those wishes were. On the other level on which the poem operates, however – Ovid the poet's lamentation for Tibullus the poet – this constitutes the (presumably) fictional realisation of a fictional hope: the fulfilment in one poet's works of a scenario wished for, apparently in vain, by the persona of another poet's works. It thus has a certain gentle humour to it (enough, at least, to raise a smile); this eases us into the broader humour of Delia and Nemesis's confrontation. It is important to note, though, that the abundant allusions to Tibullus's visions of his death and funeral that make up 3.9.47-58, light-hearted as they have become by line 58, are followed immediately by an assurance of Tibullus's presence among the shades of other famous love-poets in the Elysian fields (3.9.59-66). The transfer of all Tibullus's wishes for his funeral from hopeless fantasy to narrative reality (regardless of their inconsistency), then, far from ridiculing Tibullus, implies the power and immortality of his verse, which justify his

<sup>143</sup> On the effects of this allusion, see Cornacchia 1989.

<sup>144</sup> See for example Thomas 1965: 606-7; Cahoon 1984: 33; Perkins 1993: 463-5; Ramsby 2005: 370-1.

inclusion among such company.

In short, the images of dishevelled mourning in *Am.* 3.9, along with the other allusions to his poetry which fill the poem, serve not to cheapen Ovid's lament for Tibullus, to make its overall tone ambiguous, or to suggest irony on the part of either speaker or poet, but quite the opposite. Like the other images of loose and dishevelled hair examined in this chapter, they do not straightforwardly symbolise one thing only, but actively evoke a variety of implications. Most importantly in this case, they allude to Tibullus's own works (and to other works), and do so not just for its own sake, but in such a way as to place Tibullus, Ovid, and Ovid's tribute to him in their greater context. The resulting affectionate parody does not so much detract from Ovid's praise of Tibullus as a poet and of his persona as a lover as enliven it.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> For similar views of the allusions to Tibullus in 3.9, see Frécaut 1972: 343; Reed 1997: 267; Putnam 2005: 129-30 (on 3.9.58).

## Conclusion

When the dead Cynthia visits Propertius in 4.7, as a ghostly apparition – and a surprising one for the reader, given that Propertius bade farewell to Cynthia at the end of book three, and book four up to this point has been devoted to other subjects – she looks disturbingly like a reanimated corpse. Her eyes and her hair look just as they did when she was carried out on her bier (*eosdem habuit secum quibus est elata capillos, / eosdem oculos*, 4.7.7-8).<sup>1</sup> The image is unsettling in itself, but its full impact relies not so much on its emphasis on the changed, deathly nature of Cynthia's appearance as on its familiarity. As was noted above in reference to *Ov. Am.* 2.14.37-40,<sup>2</sup> it was standard practice for the dead to be carried out dressed in their best clothes, and adorned as in life; Cynthia's dress and ring, though burnt by her pyre, are equally familiar to Propertius (4.7.8-9). The point of describing her hairstyle as the one she wore to her grave, then, is not only to emphasise the fact that she is dead, but also to convey the idea that, nonetheless, she looks much as she did when she was alive.<sup>3</sup>

The image of Cynthia's funereal coiffure and its role in 4.7 can be taken as a representative example of the ways in which hair imagery contributes to elegy in general. Like many of the images examined in the preceding chapters, it gains in impact from the fact that it is not an isolated picture, but part of a larger pattern of imagery, and thus, both by contrast and by association, recalls earlier elegies dealing with similar subject matter. As we have seen, images of unkempt mourning, and especially of mourning mistresses, are a recurring motif; the reversal of that image that Cynthia's ghost represents – she is not the dishevelled mourner, but the well-coiffed deceased – makes the themes and implications of those passages resonate as she goes on to relate all the ways in which Propertius has failed to

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<sup>1</sup> Warden (1980: 19) notes that the description echoes that of Patroclus's ghost at *Il.* 23.66-7, but that the addition of a reference to Cynthia's styled hair helps to 'set the description in a [Roman] ritual context'.

<sup>2</sup> See above, pg. 201-2.

<sup>3</sup> See Warden 1980: 18-19.

live up to the ideals he espoused in them. Even the sense of eroticism attached to many of those images of dishevelled mourning (consider Prop. 2.13.27-30, 55-6; 2.24.51-2; 3.13.17-22) is retained here, though transferred (again, with unsettling effect) to the deceased. Cynthia's hairstyle and eyes and clinging dress had been focuses of her attractive power over Propertius in life (1.1.1; 1.2.1-3; 2.1.5-8, 11-12; 2.3.13-16), and the attention he here pays to the same features suggests that they retain some of that power, despite being grimly altered by her death and partial cremation.<sup>4</sup> The half-familiar, 'undead' appearance of Cynthia's eyes, hair, and *cultus* in general thus also contributes to the metapoetic aspect of her return from the grave. We have seen how hairstyles are an important focus of metaphors associating aspects of elegiac verse with aspects of the *puella*'s appearance. Cynthia's appearance here perhaps suggests that despite the changed content of book four as compared with Propertius's earlier books, certain essential features, such as the poet's Callimachean values (which Cynthia's hair had symbolised, for example, at 1.2.1-3 and 2.1.7-8), remain familiar.<sup>5</sup> All these effects, though, depend on the fact that the image ties into cultural associations and symbolism that must have had powerful and, often, personal significance for contemporary readers. For a readership used to seeing oddly lifelike corpses escorted through town to their pyres, looking more as they might have looked every day than the dishevelled mourners accompanying them, the idea of one showing up back at home in much the same state would not only tap into general human anxieties about life and death, but also have specific cultural resonances. The same principle applies to the other individual images and patterns of imagery examined above. They have a variety of purposes and effects, but these all rely first and foremost on the societal implications and cultural connotations of each image, whether directly, by reference to symbols encountered day to day by poet and reader, or indirectly, via the influence similar symbols had on shaping the tropes and traditions of

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<sup>4</sup> See Warden 1980: 20; Papanghelis 1987: 151.

<sup>5</sup> On the symbolic implications of Cynthia's return to life, see Butrica 1996a: 148-53.

ancient literature. Only once these implications have been acknowledged and considered can we understand the ways in which such imagery is employed and manipulated by each poet.

I have focused on the hair imagery in love elegy because it is a particularly prominent motif in this genre, and one that, as I hope to have demonstrated, the elegists approach in strikingly varied and original ways. Unsurprisingly given their unique treatment of hair imagery, we can see elegy's influence in the ways in which motifs that had been significant to them are approached in later works and in other genres. The striking appearance of Cynthia's ghost, discussed above, is in a certain sense an apt metaphor for the 'afterlife' that elegiac hair imagery enjoyed. Familiar, but changed to suit different requirements, reminiscences of these images gain depth and impact both from their recollection of the contexts in which they had appeared in love elegy, and from deviations from these. The most immediate references to and reinterpretations of elegiac hair imagery come in Ovid's larger corpus. There is not enough space here to discuss his reapplication of this imagery at length,<sup>6</sup> but a few illustrative examples, first from the *Heroides*, and then from the *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto*, will suffice to suggest how it operates.

At *Her.* 3.77-82, Briseis, imagining the life she can look forward to if she accompanies Achilles back to Greece, first begs him not to stand by if his wife is harsh with her and tears her hair (*neue meos coram scindi patiare capillos*, 3.79); then, reconsidering, she states that she would endure even this indignity, rather than be left behind. Her willingness to submit to this particular act of violence is reminiscent of that offered by Tibullus at 1.6.71-2, or Propertius at 3.8.5, but its tone and effects are entirely changed by the differences between those scenarios and this one. Most importantly, Briseis is an actual slave; as we saw in the chapter on Hair-pulling, a consistent element of the elegiac lover's offers to submit to violence is that they are unlikely to be acted upon, and never quite

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<sup>6</sup> On one notable example, the Apollo and Daphne episode of *Met.* 1, see above, pg. 194-5. For other hair-related images in Ovid's larger corpus that rely on the tropes of love elegy, see above, pg. 74 n.146, pg. 189 n.21, pg. 195 n.38.

constitute a full surrender of power. Furthermore, Briseis predicts that she will be harshly treated not by Achilles himself, but by his jealous wife; the frisson inherent in images of elegiac mistresses laying violent hands on their lovers, then, along with any implication that that violence suggests the depth of their passion, is absent here. The picture is essentially a fusion of the situations cited and the images of women's jealous violence against those under their power at Prop. 3.15.13-14, 4.7.45-6, and 4.8.57-62. The genuine selflessness and resignation to submission and slavery that Briseis is willing to embrace thus shines a light on the empty and/or stealthily self-serving aspects of the elegiac lover's similar offers.<sup>7</sup> The passage would be effective even in isolation, through its general evocation of the trope of *seruitium amoris*, but it gains a further layer of significance by comparison with the more specific precedents that it evokes.

The same principle applies to patterns of hair imagery running through the *Tristia* and the *Epistulae ex Ponto*. Appropriately, given the air of melancholy pervading Ovid's exile poetry, images of dishevelled lamentation are common. *Tristia* 1 itself, as a quasi-personified book-roll, is left shaggy and unkempt (*nec fragili geminae poliantur pumice frontes, / hirsutus passis ut uideare comis*, 1.1.11-12).<sup>8</sup> In this it imitates its creator, who, on the morning he is taken into exile, is similarly ill-groomed and unshaven (*Trist.* 1.3.89-90). His wife, on the same occasion, falls to the ground and dirties her hair in her lamentation (1.3.93-4). Such images, of course, resemble the scenes of dishevelled lamentation from love elegy in part because both are tapping into the same cultural practices and associations. But, for certain scenes, more specific precedents call up implications beyond those that the images carry on their own. As Ovid imagines his wife receiving news of his death abroad, for example, he begs her not to scratch her cheeks and tear her hair in mourning (*parce tamen lacerare genas, nec scinde capillos*, *Trist.* 3.3.51-2). The request recalls Tibullus's words to

<sup>7</sup> Acontius's willingness to have Cydippe tear his hair, at *Her.* 20.85, has a similar effect, but works by analogy rather than by contrast.

<sup>8</sup> For the rough edges of a book-roll compared to hair, see also [Tib.] 3.1.10.

Delia at 1.1.67-8 (*parce solutis / crinibus et teneris, Delia, parce genis*), but the dismal tone of Ovid's vision of his own death, as contrasted with that of Tibullus's fantasy funeral, changes the tone of the request to match. The reason Ovid's wife is to check her mourning is not that her hurt would pain him, as in Tibullus, but that she lost him once before, when he was sent into exile – as we know from *Trist.* 1.3.91-100, she did indeed lament as if he had died – and need not mourn a second time (3.3.51-4). The dishevelled Amor who visits Ovid at *Ex Pont.* 3.3.13-20 likewise recalls an elegiac precedent, from Ovid's own lament for the dead Tibullus (*Am.* 3.9.9-12), but this time the image itself is altered to suit its changed context: Amor's appearance is not beautifully picturesque, as in *Am.* 3.9, but rather sordid. Instead of hanging in locks on his shoulders and drinking his tears (*Am.* 3.9.11), his hair is described as unadorned, uncombed, and hanging down into his face, which is itself *horrida* (*Ex Pont.* 3.3.15-17). His wings do not simply hang listlessly (*Am.* 3.9.9), but are ruffled and grubby-looking (*Ex Pont.* 3.3.18-20).<sup>9</sup> Via such skewed reminiscences of comparatively idealised and romanticised images, Ovid conflates the dishevelment of mourners with the self-neglect of those lamenting their disgrace – and, for that matter, likens both to the lack of *cultus* of Tomis and its inhabitants.<sup>10</sup> Such equations support the conceit of his exile as a living death that runs through both works.<sup>11</sup>

The motif of grey hair also reappears in altered guise in Ovid's exile poetry. Propertius and Tibullus, writing in their youth, had used the image in visualising what the future might hold for them and their mistresses (and for their poetry). For Ovid's speaker, though, old age is a present reality; he was already greying when he was sent into exile (*Trist.* 4.10.93-4).<sup>12</sup> In an echo of Prop. 3.5.24 (*sparserit et nigras alba senecta comas*) at *Trist.*

<sup>9</sup> On feathers as equivalent to hair, see above, pg. 228, and below, n.14. Note also that Amor's appearance is the inverse of that described at *Am.* 1.2.41 (*tu pinnas gemma, gemma uariante capillos*).

<sup>10</sup> See *Trist.* 5.7.18 (*non coma, non ulla barba resecta manu* – itself an echo of *Ars* 1.518) and 5.7.50 (*oraque sunt longis horrida tecta comis*); the latter image closely resembles that of the unkempt Amor.

<sup>11</sup> See *Trist.* 1.3.21-4, 89-98; 1.7.19-20; 5.1.47-8; *Ex Pont.* 1.7.9-10; 2.3.3; 3.5.33-4; 4.12.43-4.

<sup>12</sup> On old age and Ovid's exile poetry, see de Luce 1989.

4.8.1-2 (*Iam mea cycneas imitantur tempora plumas, / inficit et nigras alba senecta comas*), the exchange of future for present is underlined by the replacement of *sparserit*, suggesting a gradual change,<sup>13</sup> with *inficit*, suggesting a sudden and striking one. The transition from youth to age looks more abrupt from the other side. The allusion also adds depth and bite to Ovid's disappointment with his old age; whereas Propertius's speaker was free to imagine the ways in which he might decide to fill his retirement from love poetry, Ovid's has already reached the final phase of his poetic career, and found that all is not as he would have hoped.<sup>14</sup> The image of greying hair is used to similar purpose at the start of *Ex Pont.* 1.4, as Ovid describes how his misfortunes have made him old before his time (*Iam mihi deterior canis aspergitur*<sup>15</sup> *aetas*, 1.4.1), but is rehabilitated towards the end of the poem by another reminiscence of Propertius. Imagining that his wife has also been prematurely aged by her cares (1.4.47-8), Ovid prays that he might see her again, and kiss her white hair: *o ego di faciant talem te cernere possim, / caraque mutatis oscula ferre comis!* (1.4.49-50). As at Prop. 2.18.18 (*et canae totiens oscula ferre comae*), which Ovid's pentameter echoes, the image uses white hair as a positive symbol of the longevity of a relationship, and vividly suggests a love well enough underpinned by mature devotion to be undiminished by the loss of youthful beauty; the allusion is reinforced by mention of Aurora a few lines later (1.4.57-8). Again, the different circumstances of Ovid's speaker change the thrust of the original idea, but here do so in an altogether opposite way. In the Propertian passage, the point had been Cynthia's failure to imitate Aurora's (and Propertius's own) level of devotion; here, Ovid has reached the age to which such devotion is appropriate, has a wife rather than a

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<sup>13</sup> See above, pg. 163.

<sup>14</sup> Ovid's description of his hair as *cycneas* recalls Horace's swan ode (*Carm.* 2.20), another reflection on the phases in a poetic career; whereas Horace's transformation into a swan symbolised a move to bigger and better things (see Silk 1956; Jacobson 1995), Ovid has all the white plumage and none of the lofty prospects. See de Luce 1989: 213 n.23. On white hair and comparisons of aged poets to swans, see Frank 1921; Nisbet & Hubbard 1978: 333 and *ad* 2.20.10.

<sup>15</sup> Judging by its figurative meanings, 'to stain with disgrace, sully the reputation of, besmirch', etc. (*OLD*, *s.u.* *aspergo*, 3), *aspergo* here holds more actively negative connotations than *spargo* at Prop. 3.5.24.

fickle mistress, and has achieved the reciprocal and long-lasting love that can only be a fantasy in the context of love elegy.<sup>16</sup> That it is marred by the external circumstance of his exile emphasises the cruelty of his punishment, which has separated the pair.

These and similar reapplications of elegiac imagery serve to emphasise the differences between the tone, content, and context of the exile poetry and of Ovid's amatory works; familiar but skewed images and situations from love elegy give the change in the speaker's circumstances more specific impact than original and unrelated images might. Here and in his other works, then, an understanding of how the images alluded to operate in their original contexts – of what cultural associations they tap into and how the elegists manipulate them – gives us insight, in turn, into the meaning and purposes of Ovid's reworkings of the same images.

Of course, the elegists and their poetic techniques, including their use of hair imagery, also influenced poets outside their own ranks, and the same principle applies in these cases. Consider Seneca's use of *cultus* as a theme and motif in his *Phaedra*. The language that Phaedra uses to express her passion for Hippolytus frequently echoes that of the elegiac lover,<sup>17</sup> and these reminiscences of elegy suggest that it would be profitable to look at the *cultus* motif in its elegiac context. Phaedra is described by her nurse as wracked by indecision on the simplest questions, including whether she would like to have her hair dressed (*iubet / . . . solui comas / rursusque fingi*, 370-2); when she appears, soon afterwards, she expresses the desire to strip off her adornments and let her hair flow free, in imitation of Hippolytus's Amazon mother (387-403; hair, 393-5, 401-2). Both passages are strongly influenced by Euripides's *Hippolytus* (243-6; 198-238); his Phaedra's indecision, though, centres on whether her hair is to be veiled or not, and is linked to her fluctuating feelings of

<sup>16</sup> On Ovid's wife in the exile poetry, see Helzlsouer 1989, especially 185-9.

<sup>17</sup> Consider lines 184-94, 218-19 (the compulsion of Amor); 233-5, 611-18 (*seruitium amoris*); 360-83 (love as a sickness). Phaedra's desire to accompany Hippolytus as he hunts, at 233-5, is particularly reminiscent of [Tib.] 3.9.11-18.

shame. With the elegiac attitude of Seneca's Phaedra in mind, one might suggest that her different focus, on whether or not her hair is to be styled and adorned, reflects not only a difference in cultural expectations related to the veiling of women's hair, but the moral ambiguities related to *cultus*, as played on by the elegists. It is Hippolytus's lack of *cultus*, his *incomptus decor* (657) – the outward sign of his lack of interest in attracting women – that Phaedra finds so appealing;<sup>18</sup> her desire to emulate it, then, though on one level it represents the wish to deny her love, through a rejection of morally ambiguous luxury, also demonstrates the transferral of her desire for Hippolytus into the wish to take on herself those features that she finds so attractive in him. His lack of *cultus*, after all, also represents freedom from societal norms, which, in a different sense, is what Phaedra longs for.<sup>19</sup> Seneca, in short, exploits the same tensions that the elegists exploited (for example) at Prop. 3.14, or Ov. *Ars* 1.505-12, and perhaps consciously evokes the various ambiguities they created or highlighted; note that Hippolytus is one of the *exempla* cited by Ovid in the latter passage (*Ars* 1.511).

One might also consider the scenes of dishevelled mourning that recur throughout Lucan's *Bellum Civile*;<sup>20</sup> though a tradition of scenes of epic lamentation running back to the *Iliad* is their main referent,<sup>21</sup> elegiac mourning scenes may also be evoked in certain passages. Marcia, when she begs Cato to remarry her, has come directly from the funeral of her second husband, Hortensius, dishevelled (*effusas laniata comas*), bruised, and covered in ashes (2.335-6). But Cato wouldn't have her any other way (*non aliter placitura uiro*, 337). The point of Marcia's sordid appearance is, of course, to reinforce the virtuous motives of Cato's remarriage; it emphasises Marcia's *pietas*, and removes any festive atmosphere from

<sup>18</sup> There are multiple layers of dramatic irony in the accusation of hypocrisy Theseus levels at Hippolytus, citing his simple *cultus* (915-17); Euripides's Theseus, in the parallel passage (*Hipp.* 946-57), does not mention Hippolytus's dress.

<sup>19</sup> See Lattimore 1962: 12-14. For more on the ambiguities played on in lines 399-403, see Armstrong 2006: 103.

<sup>20</sup> E.g. 1.186-9; 2.21-42; 8.739-41; 9. 55-7, 171-2.

<sup>21</sup> See Fantham 1999; Keith 2008.

their wedding.<sup>22</sup> This effect is made more pointed, though, if we recall the eroticised images of dishevelled mourning in elegy. The idea that Marcia's appearance is 'pleasing' to Cato (337) evokes and toys with such images, but subverts them by suggesting that the appeal of Marcia's mourning is quite different for Cato than it was for Propertius or Tibullus: not that it is attractive, but that it matches his own state of symbolic mourning, which has kept him from shaving or combing his hair since the outbreak of civil war (2.372-6). In an inversion of this scene, Cleopatra, seemingly following the advice of Ovid's *praeceptor amoris* at *Ars* 3.431-2, is depicted as exploiting the erotic potential of dishevelment, in a conscious attempt to manipulate Caesar:

*quem formae confisa suae Cleopatra sine ullis  
tristis adit lacrimis, simulatum compta dolorem  
qua decuit, ueluti laceros dispersa capillos.* (10.82-4)

Once this false state of lamentation has achieved its desired effect, she reverts to her usual conspicuous luxury (10.138-44). Both passages make their point without any necessary recollection of elegy, through the general cultural associations of loose hair. But consciousness of the literary precedent for the eroticisation of dishevelled mourning that elegy represents adds a layer of implication to both passages, characterising Cato as a virtuous counterpoint to the self-indulgent lover, and Cleopatra as an analogue to the self-serving courtesan.

In these reminiscences of elegiac motifs as in the passages on which they draw, acknowledging and considering the sociocultural underpinnings of the hair imagery in elegy enriches our understanding and appreciation of the genre in a number of ways. On the most basic level, it helps us to avoid misinterpreting individual passages by inadvertently applying our own cultural assumptions. But recognising where the elegists are deviating from literary and cultural tradition, where they are upholding it, and where they are manipulating it to suit

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<sup>22</sup> See Johnson 1987: 43.

their own ends also gives us more general insight into their respective goals and approaches. The same principle, naturally, applies to any strand of imagery tying into specific cultural assumptions, as employed in any genre of literature. The hair imagery in elegy, though, is a particularly notable example, because of the range and importance of the themes with which it is linked, and the originality of the ways in which the elegists exploit and explore those links. I hope, then, that my analysis has demonstrated the benefits to be gained from approaching this kind of imagery in a methodical way. The prominence in the works of all three elegists of the various motifs identified above, and of the themes attached to them, suggests something of the character and priorities of the genre as a whole, while direct comparison of the ways in which each poet handles those motifs aids in our recognition of the individual approach of each poet, and the nature of the innovations each brought to the genre.

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